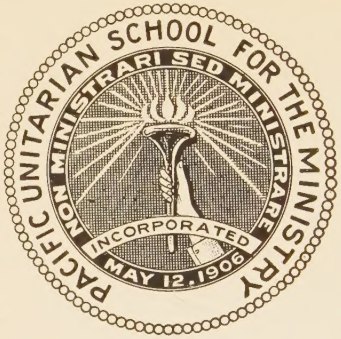

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1st Series. No. 156.

THE

DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS.

By Rev. J. W. THOMPSON.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

July, 1840.

Price 4 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, SCHOOL STREET.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS.

All Christians look to the cross for salvation. The death of Christ is the life of their hope. Whatever difference of opinion may exist in regard to the method by which his death accomplishes the work of redemption, all agree in the main fact that redemption is its work.

It has been the effect of controversy on this subject to bring into too great prominence obscure and difficult points, and to keep out of sight the plainer and more useful, about which, when justly considered, there can be but one opinion. But the plain and useful are, after all, the only essential points, and in these all true Christians agree. There is a broad common ground, firm as the pavement of heaven, on which all stand. I invite Christian believers, of all denominations, to take a candid survey with me of this common ground. It is the design of this Tract to show in what particular views of the death of the Saviour all his disciples must be substantially of one mind. I wish to make it appear that these are highly important views, far more so in respect to their influence on the character than any others, and that they are perfectly intelligible and free from mystery, whilst those about

which opinion is divided, are such as nobody can clearly understand or explain.

What was there, then, in the death of Christ, that served to draw men unto him and to save them, according to his words, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This is the subject of the present inquiry.

I. I go back to the time of the crucifixion, and first look at the subject from that point of observation. And I remark, that in order to gain for Christ and his doctrine a reception in the world, something was immediately needed to soften the hard hearts of his enemies, to mitigate the ferocity with which they had pursued him, and to make them, if possible, feel tenderly and kindly towards him, so that they could examine his character and pretensions with calmness and candor. This, it will be seen at once, would be a great point gained. If the opposition of but a single individual could be removed, and his mind fairly opened to the truth concerning Jesus, that individual, in some circumstances, might give an impulse and a celebrity to the new faith which it would never lose, and be instrumental, directly and indirectly, in converting hundreds, and, in the generations of his descendants, perhaps thousands. Whatever, then, contributed to remove the prejudice and hostility of the people, and to open their hearts to the truth in relation to Jesus, would proportionably strengthen his cause, make his doctrines known, and draw the confidence and affection of men towards him. Of this there can be no dispute. Every person must admit it.

Now, is not this precisely the effect that might be naturally expected to follow from the *death of Christ*, — its scene and circumstances? Is it not the effect which did

actually ensue? Was not a sensible and deep impression in his favor, made upon the hearts of the by-standers, when, as the Saviour yielded up his spirit, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, and the earth quaked beneath their feet, and the sun was darkened in the heavens? Could they easily forget this? Could they fail of perceiving the momentous meaning of it? And when they looked upon the blessed sufferer, and saw how patiently he bore the insults and cruelties that were heaped upon him, with what a melting eye of compassion he surveyed the numerous throng that exulted over him as though he had been an atrocious malefactor, with what calm majesty he raised his eyes and prayed, not that fire might come down from heaven and consume them, not even that they might receive a just retribution for their iniquities, but that God would mercifully forgive them, can it be, I ask, that seeing all this, — a spectacle such as neither men nor angels had seen before, — not one of all that multitude was softened, not one relented, not one, overcome by the matchless display of goodness, said within himself, "This was, indeed, a righteous man!" Nay, can it be doubted that of all that assemblage, not a few were melted with pity, and yearned with love towards him, and held down their heads to conceal their tears? that not a few, as they withdrew from the tragic scene, walked sadly and timidly to their homes, at every step praying God to forgive them, starting at the spectres which their imaginations, excited by the terrors of guilt, conjured up, and repeating to themselves in broken utterances, "How like a God he died!"

No, it cannot be doubted that some, even of the most inveterate of his foes, as the shades of evening drew on,

and they slunk away with fear and shame from the place of death, whispered one to another, "What, if this shall prove to have been the Son of God?" — and as the red sky of the twilight glared upon them, "His blood is upon us, the blood of the innocent!" — and that they sighed despairingly, and smote their breasts, and cursed themselves, and deprecated the vengeance of heaven. Aye, and many a mother was there in Israel who watched all that night, and started at the breath of her babes, and hid her head at the sound of the wind, and expected momently some terrible vindication of the murdered Prophet.

This exhibition upon the cross was, then, I maintain, the *preparation for the faith of many*. It prepared their hearts to receive evidence concerning Jesus. They could not, after this, effectually resist it. It convinced them that there was something in this man whom they had put to death which they had not before apprehended; something which belonged to no other man; something almost divine. All that they who are thus impressed need farther, to satisfy them, is information concerning him, or some additional proof, however slight, that he came forth from God.

Besides; after what they had seen on the cross, who was at liberty longer to doubt that, at least, the dying Teacher was sincere, that he fully believed his own doctrine, and that it was from a deep conviction of duty that he acted. No man could doubt it. Doubt was utterly impossible. Men never expose themselves to violent suffering for falsehood's sake, unless they believe they are to gain a more than counter-balancing advantage. No man ever suffered martyrdom for what he believed to be a lie. To call in question the sincerity of Jesus, therefore, after

what they had seen, would have been to deny all experience, and to give up the acknowledged principles of human nature. And was not this a great point to establish before the world? Would it not go far towards breaking down that wall of prejudice which obstructed their view of the spotless and divine character of Jesus? Would it not put them in a condition to be "drawn unto him" by any new proof that might be given of the divinity of his mission, and the truth of his word?

Such proof is at hand. At the expiration of three days after the crucifixion, a new manifestation of himself is made, testimony in his behalf is given of the most convincing nature. The solid tomb which it was thought would be a safe prison for his body, suddenly throws open its massive door; the heavy rock which lay before it is rolled away, and he who "was crucified, dead, and buried," comes forth alive! The promise which he had made to this effect is fulfilled. His prophetic word is verified. He proves that death is not annihilation. He brings immortality to the light of the senses.

Now, could such an event as this be rumored to have taken place, — I say *rumored*, — without drawing general attention to the person principally connected with it; to what that person had done and professed prior to his death; and to the remarkable circumstances that attended his death? Could such an event be *believed* to have taken place without producing the most important changes of feeling and opinion in regard to Jesus; or without inspiring all honest and sober men thus believing, with an earnest and intrepid zeal for him, and with a determination to live and die in the defence of his righteous cause? It would not have been in the power of any man, believ-

ing this fact, to be indifferent to him to whom it appertained. This fact was believed. All who witnessed the death of Jesus were prepared by the evidence which that furnished to believe in his resurrection. They did believe in it. When it was told in the city that he was risen, and that he had been seen by certain men and women, there was not a man who had been a witness of his death who could say in his heart that he did not believe it. Many, I know, pretended not to believe it. Many hoped it was not true. Many, perhaps, doubted. And some went so far as to put in circulation a miserable falsehood to explain the mysterious circumstances which had confessedly taken place. But, generally, the story was believed. By the resurrection, multitudes were led to reflect on what had previously happened, and their thoughts were turned unto Christ. They became anxious to hear all that might be known about him. They inquired diligently of all who had heard his word. They came together to talk about him. And when one of the Apostles, a short time afterwards, preached to them of Jesus and the resurrection, three thousand in one day gave in their adhesion to the new faith, and were baptized. And t e word of God thenceforth grew mightily and prevailed. Citizens at home embraced it openly. Strangers from distant places acknowledged the prince of life, and carried with them, as they returned, the glad tidings of his kingdom. Masters in Israel heard of the gracious words that had proceeded out of his mouth, and gave God glory. Sages and philosophers wondered for a season, then bowed to the gentle, but all-subduing faith. Wicked kings, before whom it was preached, trembled, and were "almost

persuaded ; " and finally it prevailed even over them, and was installed upon the throne of the earth.

In what has now been advanced, I apprehend Christians generally will concur. And who can say that these considerations, involving fundamental facts, in which we agree, are unimportant as it respects our interest in Christ and our salvation by him? They go to the vital question of the origin and truth of the Christian religion, — a question which must be settled in our mind before that religion can be expected to exert much influence on our character.

But this view of the subject covers only a small part of it. It has other aspects not less striking. Before I proceed to present them, however, I wish briefly to define the object of the mission of Christ, because until that is clearly ascertained it is impossible to determine what bearing his death may have upon it.

What then was the great object of the mission of Christ? There is no difficulty in framing an answer which all believers will accept. Christ was sent to breathe new life into the soul of man, to fill him with new hopes, to raise him from his degraded and wretched condition to a state of virtue and spiritual activity and joy. He was sent to reconcile the world unto God. He was sent and suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. To bring us to God, then, to unite man with his Maker, to elevate his immortal nature into unison with all that is right, and true, and good, — with infinite rectitude, truth, and goodness, — this was the object of his mission. And no Christian will hesitate to admit, (such was the character of Jesus,) that in proportion as man grows into his likeness, transfers to his

own soul the distinctive features of his, in that proportion this object is accomplished. Christ was one with the Father. Man, in order to become one with the Father, must become such in character as Christ was. This needs no proof.

II. Let me now endeavor to show, in the second place, how the death of Christ contributes directly, and powerfully, to the accomplishment of this object.

1. And I remark, first, that it was necessary that men who had debased their nature, disowned or forgotten all religious truth, revolted from their supreme ruler, before they could be expected to return to God in obedience and worship, should be made acquainted with his disposition towards them; that they should be convinced of his willingness to receive them, of his regard for their welfare, of the clemency of his nature, and of his desire to make them happy. An assurance to this effect, given in such a manner as to leave no room for doubt, would be more certain than anything else to touch their hearts, to fill them with regrets, to awaken love, and to beget and foster the resolution to return to him.

From what we know of the principles of human conduct, was not this, evidently, the first thing to be done in the process of redemption? For, is it not natural to be well affected towards those who show good will to us? Do not kindness and love awaken kindness and love in return? And especially if our superiors manifest a warm regard for us, sympathise with us, devise means to benefit us, are helpers of our joy, is it not natural for us, however unworthy we may be of their notice, — and in a greater degree the more unworthy we are, — to be grateful to

them, to respect them, to wish to be of service to them and to please them?

Now, in the redemption of fallen man, the Creator proceeded in conformity to this principle. The death of Christ was the most striking proof that could be given of his infinite compassion for the children of men. I want no stronger evidence that God is still the friend of man. I need no better assurance of his love towards my race. For what is this which he has done? He has so loved the world that he has given his only begotten son to die for it! It is of no consequence under this point of view, *how* the death of his son is of use to the world. It is enough that he gave him up to die for the benefit of man; enough, that is, to show how deeply, how infinitely, God loved man. This Jesus stood in such relation to God and was so dear to him, that the scriptures call him his "only begotten," his "best beloved son." Of all his creatures on earth and in heaven, not one was so precious in his sight, so near to his bosom, or so much like himself, as he. He was, in fact, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person! But God saw that by making his life a life of sorrow, by clothing him in the form of a servant, and by permitting him to be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," man would be benefited, the dormant energies of his soul awakened, his divine reason that had been rolled and trampled in the dust, placed again upon its throne, and the harmony of the world restored; and he consented. With all this in view, He gave him to us. With the eye of a father towards an only son He observed his reception amongst men, — saw the scorn which was poured upon him, and yet endured it, — heard the raving multitude cry out for his crucifixion, and yet made no in-

terposition, — witnessed the nailing of his hands and his feet to the cross and the piercing of his side, and listened to the penetrating appeal which his agony extorted from him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" — and yet forbore to strike his murderers! Is not this proof enough that God loved man, that he was willing to receive, forgive and bless him? I appeal to the parental heart, — to those who know what it is to love a child, — a child altogether lovely, — and I ask them what stronger proof of God's love for man they could desire, or He from his boundless store could furnish? Who does not acknowledge the justness and weight of an apostle's inference from this fact: "He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him freely give us all things?" The divine love was never more signally displayed than by the Cross of Christ. Man was God's enemy, and yet he had pity on him. Man was sunk low in guilt and wretchedness, and yet he gave his son to a death of torture and ignominy, that he might redeem him. In view of these things how can any Christian point to the cross and say, "Behold there an exhibition of the righteous wrath of God! Behold in that dying sufferer an expression of his eternal and unappeasable hatred of sin!" There is not the poor pretext for such a representation to be found in the scriptures. On the contrary, it is repugnant to all that they do teach, as well as to the highest dictates of the soul. The wrath of God manifested in the death-groans of his Son! To me there seems impiety, if I ought not rather to say, blasphemy, in the thought. Let us say rather with the apostle Paul, and say it thankfully, "God COMMENDETH HIS LOVE

towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!"

But the question here arises, how *can* man, guilty, degraded, helpless, blind, return to righteousness, holiness, and God? In this deplorable condition, what can he do of himself? There is but one answer. He can follow Christ; or, in the scripture phrase, "*put on Christ.*" In this way, and in no other, can he return. But, in order to do this, he must see what was in Christ, — must comprehend him, — must know his spirit. Christ, therefore, must be exhibited to man; the sentiments and principles by which he was actuated and governed must be clearly disclosed. He must make such a display of them before man's eyes as he cannot fail to see. Now, this exhibition, Jesus could not have made except by submitting to the death which he suffered.

2. It was necessary, then, I maintain, in the second place, that Christ should die, in order to set before men in the most impressive and effectual manner, the sentiments, principles, and virtues, by the possession and exercise of which, and *by no other means*, they might find heaven and dwell with God. His death had this great effect. And it is an effect different from any produced by his teaching or by what had been previously known of his character. It stands by itself in glorious pre-eminence. I can listen to the discourses of Jesus with profit and delight; I can be moved by his tender appeals to the higher feelings of my nature; I can admire the wisdom and beauty of his precepts and parables; I can feel my heart yearning towards him when I behold him at the bed-side of the sick, in the house of sorrow, at the grave of his friend; when I see him taking little children in his arms

and blessing them; and when I behold him mourning the impending fate of the beloved city of his countrymen. But it is only when I see him stretched upon the cross that I tremble with amazement at his transcendent excellence; that all his goodness seems concentrated in a single point, and exhibited at one view; that the great sentiments and principles of his character assume, as it were, a visible form, and awe me by their sublimity and divineness. It is these principles and sentiments displaying their immortal force and beauty upon the cross, that impart to it its unearthly glory; that pour a light upon it such as never shone upon the death-bed of a saint or the funeral-pile of a martyr; that have converted it from an instrument of shame and torture into an emblem of truth and goodness; and that have made it a preacher of righteousness and love, more eloquent and effective than ever spoke with the articulate voice. Yes, it is to the cross of Jesus that we are to look for a manifestation of heavenly principles and sentiments, such as can be seen no where beside; for calm patience under aggravated sufferings, such as was never beheld before; for faith, for resignation, for a noble generosity, for soul-felt piety, such as neither man nor angel can excel.

But it is not these quiet, unresisting, tender and submissive virtues alone that adorn the cross of Christ and constitute its marvellous power. There is, also, a majesty connected with them, — proceeding from them, should I not say? — a moral energy, a still courage, moving on steadily in the face of opposition, and danger, and suffering, unexcited, unabashed, looking firmly at the result, resolved never to be diverted from it, but to encounter the horrors of death and the grave in reaching it, which fills

us with profound admiration. It is this trait in the character of Jesus developed upon the cross, which is exerting an influence on his disciples, and through them upon the great interests of man, which we have no power to estimate. It is multiplying co-workers with God in the world's renovation. It is making self-sacrifice popular. It has converted philanthropy into a common and active sentiment. It placed Duty on a throne, and put a sceptre in her hand, and commanded all men to cast their crowns at her feet. And the command has been obeyed by thousands, and will be by an ever increasing number, till her authority shall be universally acknowledged, and all opposition to her sway shall cease. Go on, divine empress of the christian heart! till from the cross, the centre of thy glory, thou hast encompassed the earth with thy girdle, and put all things under thy feet.

If Jesus had merely recommended the christian virtues, and given them prominence in his teaching, and earnestly called on men to respect and cherish them, this would have been more than any prophet or philosopher before him had done, and would have marked him as an extraordinary man, a wonderful counsellor, an inspired sage. But when, in addition to this, he lives out those virtues when he puts them on and comes before the world in their radiant beauty, when he submits to a death of disgrace and torture, and in the midst of his terrible sufferings, where alone they could be seen, brings to view the holiest sentiments and the sublimest principles that are found in the universe, he shows himself to be something more than an extraordinary man, more than an inspired teacher, more than a patient martyr: he proves himself to be the Son of God!

Now, will any one who knows how powerful is the law of imitation in human nature, how natural the process of moral assimilation, pretend that such a living manifestation of the principles and virtues of Christianity could exert but little influence on the hearts of those who observed or who contemplate it, — could not do much towards bringing them to God? Let us see. I suppose myself removed to a great distance from the source of good; my moral sight is dim; my moral faculties are feeble; I am estranged from the love of my Father; I am profoundly ignorant. But I wish to return; to see with a clearer sight; to walk with a firmer step; to feel the spirit of goodness; to know the truth. How I may do all this; I have asked the wise men of the world, but they could not tell me. How I may do all this; I now inquire of the new Teacher. "I will show you," he replies; "FOLLOW ME." I take him then for my guide and my example. I am proud, but he is humble. I am passionate, but he is gentle. I am ambitious, but he seeks not his own glory. I am covetous, but he loves not the world, neither the things of the world. I am regardless of my neighbor's welfare, but he goes about doing good. In his daily life I see distinctly all these traits of excellence, and I try to copy them. But this world is not all sun-shine and joy. It is a scene of sorrow, suffering, and death, and it is a great problem how I am to bear myself in these circumstances. "I will solve it," says the Saviour. "Go with me through all my trials and sufferings, even to the last, and learn of me." I follow him, with humble step, as a learner. I find him an object of bitter persecution, — and this may be my lot; how is it to be met, — how does he meet it? "When he was reviled, he reviled not again;

when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." I find him surrounded by the terrors of death, — and even this must be my fate; and what does he do, — what must I do? He suffers patiently, without complaining; so must I suffer. He submits willingly to death because duty demands it; so must I submit to the claims of duty at any cost or hazard. He looks with pity and compassion upon his implacable foes, prays for them, loves them to the end; so must I do if I would be of one spirit with him. He resigns his soul peacefully, trustingly, into the hands of God; and so I learn how to die! Where else could I have learned these momentous lessons? Where else could I have seen the whole soul of religion? Where else has there been condensed and represented in one man all human goodness? And here I ask, too, what there is which can dignify and exalt man, and render him mete to commune with angels and with God, that was not displayed in the last hours of Jesus upon the cross? And what that can debase him, separate him from his Maker, disinherit him of heaven, prepare him for hell, that is not rebuked and condemned by the cross of Jesus? Where, in fine, do we learn so well the unutterable worth of the soul? Where are we instructed so forcibly to forget and deny ourselves, and to love our fellow-men? Where are we taught, so impressively, to look on those who have wronged us, with pity, and to forgive them? Where else, in the hour of greatest need, in the moment of keenest suffering, in the agony of death, are we directed, by such an august example, to whom we must go for support, and how to commit ourselves to God?

Others may dwell with more satisfaction on other views

of Christ's death, may find more to admire in contemplating him as a literal sacrifice for sin, or as the vicarious subject of those punishments to which man was liable, or as affording a striking proof of God's hatred of sin; but for myself, I can take no pleasure in these views. I cannot take hold of them. They are like a spirit not to be touched. I cannot apply them to my personal use. They are a mystery to me. If true, they do me no good; they afford me no help, no light. But when I adopt the sentiment of Peter, that "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps," I have something distinct before me, — a clear proposition to think upon, — a definite thing to do, — and an implied promise that, by doing it, I shall gain something morally, spiritually, — become a better man, be carried towards heaven, be saved.

Now, let me ask, is there any reader of these pages to whom the views which have now been presented of the death of Christ seem uninviting and unimportant, — any who does not see in them topics of unsurpassed interest and value? Or, is there a Christian on the face of the earth, of any church, of any name, who would venture to deny that these views have a *high* value and interest, and are suited powerfully to affect the character of those who adopt them? I will not so underrate the judgment and candor of my fellow-men as to believe that such a Christian exists. Many there may be, who think that these views do not present the whole case, or the most important points in it. But that is not the question. The question is, are not these views of interest and value? If this is admitted, then that which I have affirmed must also be admitted, namely, that however divided in opinion

the christian world may be on the subject of the death of Christ, there is still a broad common ground on which they can all stand together. And I will here add, that standing together on such ground as I have described, with the cross of Christ before them, I see not how they dare to cherish towards one another any feelings but those which the cross has hallowed and sanctioned, or to indulge any enmities and prejudices which the cross condemns!

But we have not yet explored the whole extent of the common ground. It is wider still. There are other ends accomplished by the death of the Saviour, less important perhaps, but still highly important, about which there must be a general agreement of Christians.

III. In the third place, the death of Christ abolished the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. It brought both together into one body. By the Jewish converts his death was regarded as the last great sacrifice, as the consummation of the ceremonial of the law, as the termination of those ancient rites and ordinances which had separated the Hebrew people from all others, and as throwing all nations together, without regard to past religious distinctions into a new and better kingdom of truth. Henceforth the question was not to be, Are you a Jew or are you a Greek; but are you of Christ? Old animosities and prejudices were to be abandoned. The great doctrine of the common origin of all men, and of their equality in the sight of him who died for all, and of God, was to be established. The principle of universal brotherhood was to be substituted for that confined and partial affection, which, both amongst Jews and Gentiles, had

been sanctioned by their respective religions. The fountain of religious knowledge and faith that had been sealed up in Judea was to be opened, that its waters might flow out for the healing of all nations.

But how did the death of Jesus tend to this result? Let us see. The intelligent Jewish convert, believing that the end of the law had been accomplished when Christ died, and that a new and more perfect institution had received the seal of heaven in his blood, gave up, as a matter of course, those peculiarities of religion which had separated him from the Gentile; and the Gentile convert, thinking only of his Master, — his life, his sufferings, his cross, his resurrection, — was drawn by an irrepressible sympathy towards all who loved and honored him. He had no such deep rooted prejudices as the Jew to overcome. His antipathies were rather political than religious, and, therefore, were less difficult to conquer. But in both it was the direct tendency of the cross, that common bond of interest and affection, to overcome all prejudice, all hostility, and to draw them together in one harmonious body, sanctified by one spirit, instinct with one life, ennobled with one hope. This is one of the effects which we find attributed to the death of Christ by the apostle Paul — a sufficient authority. These are his words, addressed to his Gentile converts at Ephesus: "*But now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle-wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity*, (that is, the *cause* of the enmity) *even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, making peace, and*

that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." The cross was the means of binding them to one another and to God, because it had put an end to the great causes of enmity between them, and left them to all those sentiments and affections which it so strikingly illustrates. Was this an unworthy or insignificant end? Was it not, on the contrary, of importance sufficient to compensate for almost any sacrifice that might be necessary to compass it? All Christians who admit this, agree, then, in one more important view of the death of Christ.

IV. Once more. It was necessary that the Saviour should die for his own sake, with reference to his own personal benefit. Is it to be supposed that he passed through all the trials with which his life abounded without receiving any personal advantage from them? Was it possible that such circumstances as those into which he was brought should exert *no* influence, leave *no* permanent impression, upon his character? Let those believe it who believe that his nature was like adamant. But when I remember how his feelings were wrought upon by the sufferings of others, how like a son of man he wept, I cannot doubt that his own sufferings produced in his tender heart all their usual benign effects. Are trials designed by Providence to strengthen your virtue, to elevate your faith, to quicken your piety, and can we believe that the same cause should not produce a similar effect on him? Must we not rather believe that the extraordinary firmness of religious principle, the quiet energy and unfaltering perseverance, the noble self-sacrifice and calm resignation of Jesus, were owing, in no small degree, to

the extraordinary trials through which he passed? May it not be concluded that the cross itself, with all its horrors, was necessary to give completeness to his character, to place on it the very crown of perfection? So, at any rate, we have high authority for believing. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews holds this language: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;" "It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." This writer evidently believed, as it hence appears, that the sufferings of Christ, — and his greatest were upon the cross, — had a beneficial influence on his own character, contributing to render it perfect. Hence, when the hour came for his crucifixion, it might have been said by him in this sense, "Now is the Son of man glorified!" His principles are put to their last test, and in their triumph he will establish his title to the glory of a perfect Son of God!

I might add to this enumeration of the ends accomplished by the death of Christ, but enough has been said to sustain the position assumed, that there is a common ground on the subject sufficiently broad and stable for all true Christians to stand upon in unity and love.

The views already presented adequately explain, I conceive, all those passages of the New Testament which represent Christ as having died for us, or for our sins, as having shed his blood for the remission of sins, as having given himself for us that he might redeem us from iniquity, as well as all those which extol the cross and the glory of it. In short, they explain and authorize all the language on the subject in the New Testament, except, per-

haps, some few passages in the epistles, which seem to represent the death of Christ as a *literal sacrifice* for sin.

Here, then, we come to the point where Christians divide and walk no more together. A question of interpretation has vexed them into strenuous opposition. We have fallen upon a kind of Jewish dialect, antiquated, obsolete, of which we are generally quite ignorant, and we make it a grave matter of conscience to separate on the original meaning of a word.

Let us here enter into a brief examination of the leading idea of those who depart from us at this point, and go on, as it seems to them, into a higher field of truth, but, as it seems to us, into a region of thick darkness and error. Before we part, however, let us utter one word of friendly exhortation. We agree in some points of confessedly great importance. Let this agreement call forth mutual confidence and respect. Let us lend no hand to the putting up of a wall of partition like that which the death of Christ broke down ; and wherever we see such a work of bigotry and mischief begun, let us combine our strength to overthrow it. Away with all fear, all suspicion, all jealousy, all distrust, of one christian or one sect toward another. Believe in a prevailing rectitude of intention and soundness of faith in all. Believe in the power of even a little truth to destroy the effect of much error ; and while striving to exterminate the error, be not insensible to that truth, but rejoice in it ; welcome it ; reverence it ; regard it as a heavenly tie connecting you with all in whom it is found, as disciple to disciple and brother to brother.

I go on now to examine briefly that popular view of the death of Christ in which we do not concur, and to state

some reasons for our dissent. Many Christians regard the death of the Saviour as a satisfaction to the divine justice, which was necessary to preserve the honor of God's law. Man had violated that law, and justice required his punishment. To remit the punishment without some equivalent would expose the law to contempt, and endanger the government of God. Christ voluntarily assumed the penalty, and thus saved man from suffering it, and at the same time maintained the integrity of the law. This, as I understand it, is the doctrine of satisfaction, or of vicarious punishment; and in my ears, I confess, it sounds very little like the word of God.* It indicates a severity and an inflexibility in the government of God widely different from the lenity and tenderness of Christianity, which is the only authentic exposition we have of the principles and spirit of that government. I do not believe it was taught by Jesus or his apostles. I have searched for it in the records of their teaching, but the search has been fruitless. To my eyes it is not there. Of all the passages in which mention is made of the death of the Saviour, amounting to nearly one hundred and twenty, not one teaches or intimates that this, which we

* This arrangement, supposing it to have been made, was designed to remove from the way of God certain legal obstacles to the bestowment of spiritual gifts upon men. A belief in the fact of the completion of this design is, according to the popular creed, the essence of a true faith in Christ — without which there is no salvation. When I see a noble edifice erected and finished, and know the architect, can I not admire the magnificence and beauty of the one, and have confidence in the skill of the other, without understanding all the legal obstacles which the proprietor was obliged to remove before he obtained a title to the ground on which the building stands?

are considering, was one of its ends. And besides a total deficiency of scriptural proof in support of it, the doctrine conflicts with what the scriptures do expressly and continually teach. Where is it asserted that the honor of God's law requires that he should never remit the punishment of an offence? Where is it taught that justice, inflexible and avenging, is the only active and influential attribute of the Divine nature? Where is it intimated, that before the death of Christ there had existed in the Infinite Mind any obstacle to the exercise of mercy towards the children of men, greater than their own impenitence and wickedness? Where do we learn that God was not as kind, as merciful, as ready to forgive upon repentance, before Christ died, as after? Or that his death was the cause of any change in the disposition of God towards the human race? Surely in no writing that bears the signature of Heaven.

This doctrine cannot be true, unless it is also true that the Almighty God could never, through all ages, have forgiven a sin if Christ had not been crucified to render such an act right and safe.* Now, is there an intimation of such a fact to be found in the Bible? The Jews certainly did not believe it when they exclaimed, "Who can forgive sin but God only?" — as though it were his eternal and inalienable prerogative. The Saviour did not believe it, when he said "If ye forgive men their trespasses,

* Do the advocates of this doctrine believe that there is any efficacy in the death of Christ, considered merely as so much suffering endured and so much blood shed, irrespective of its influence on the character of believers? In other words, do they believe that the mere physical fact of his death, if those who participated in the guilt of it, and they who witnessed it, could have closed their minds

your heavenly Father will also forgive you;" — making a forgiving disposition in man the ground of his forgiveness with God. Paul did not hold it, when he wrote, "But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, *even when we were dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ." James did not admit it when he taught that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the *Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*." Indeed, I cannot find that it has any countenance, either from particular texts, or from the general scope of the New Testament; and it is impossible to reconcile it with any satisfactory conceptions of the goodness of God. It stands in direct opposition to his mercy, and denies, — whatever attempts may be made to evade this consequence, — denies an inherent and immutable disposition in him to forgive sins. The Scripture, on the contrary, teaches, the beauty and beneficence of universal nature reiterate the truth, and the voice of Heaven that comes up from the depths of man's heart confirms it, that in the beginning God was, that he is now, and that he ever will be, gracious, forgiving, and merciful, as well as just; and that no act of any being can render him more gracious, forgiving, merciful, and just, than he is eternally in his own nature, and that he cannot chain himself down to

against all reflection upon it, and their hearts to all impression from it, would have procured their salvation? If they do, how can they doubt of the salvation of all men, or gainsay the most thorough universalism? If they do not, will they answer the question, What is the kind of influence, the special effect on man's heart, of this fact which renders it operative unto salvation? Is it any other than has been imperfectly described in the preceding pages?

any laws which will interfere with the free and full exercise of his infinite attributes of love and mercy and justice.

But if we admit, for the moment, that this doctrine is true, still it is difficult to see that it has much practical importance. It only places man just where we believe he stands without it. For it places him in a condition to be pardoned on repentance. We believe that every man is now, and that all men ever have been, in that condition. The death of Christ, according to this doctrine, does not procure our pardon without repentance, but it procures the terms of repentance. It makes it right and proper for God to forgive sin upon repentance. Now, what matters it, in any practical view of the case, whether the doctrine be true or false? If we receive it, we have one duty to perform, namely, repentance; and one blessing to obtain, namely, forgiveness. But if we reject it, we still acknowledge the same duty, and hope for the same blessing. In respect to our duty and to our hope, therefore, it seems not very important whether we accept or reject the doctrine. In one case it is believed that God will forgive the penitent, because of his immutable loving kindness and tender mercy, as manifested in Jesus Christ; and in the other, that he will forgive the penitent because satisfaction for the offence has been made to his infinite justice. In both cases the result is the same. But there is this wide difference in the two cases; that in the one there is supposed a real act of forgiveness, a remarkable instance of mercy in God, while in the other, though the sinner is discharged, and in that sense forgiven, there has been, in fact, no act of forgiveness. God has exacted the uttermost farthing, and Christ has paid it all. God has not forgiven man, but has accepted the death of his Son

upon the cross, as an equivalent for the debt! It is this dark aspect of the doctrine at which our reason and our faith revolt. It robs the Creator of half his glory. It takes away that character of clemency, of condescending regard to human infirmity, of pity, of paternal tenderness, in which Jesus delighted to represent him, and by which we are most strongly moved to draw nigh to him. "We love him because he first loved us." Interpose that terrible law, unrelaxing as fate, the rigor of which the burning tears of contrition cannot soften, which inflicts all to the last jot which it has a right to inflict, and you raise a wall of ice chill and drear as death, between heaven and earth, and make the bosom of God the centre of all terrors. No clouds upon the mercy-seat but clouds of incense! Nothing to dim the lustre of that throne which has stood for eternal ages upon the foundations of truth and love! Let God appear in all the glory of his nature, the source of all life, beauty, and goodness, and let the heart of man rise up to see and love him! *

It results from the doctrine under review, or more properly is one of its phases, that the death of our Saviour was a literal sacrifice, expiatory and propitiatory, — propitiating God, doing away his wrath, cancelling our guilt in his sight. It cannot be denied that a seeming support is given to this idea by certain language in the New Testament, and particularly in the Epistles. It need not surprise us, therefore, that it has been so generally adopted.

* It might be pertinently inquired of those who advocate this doctrine whether WE are living under *the covenant of works?* if not, then, whether we are liable to the penalties threatened in that covenant? and if not, then, how Christ's death could have saved us from those penalties?

But we are not bound to receive it, unless we are sure that we perfectly understand that language, and that it admits of no other *more probable* interpretation. There is, I conceive, an antecedent probability arising from the general tenor of the Gospel, that this language does not teach, when properly understood, the doctrine alluded to. For do we not obtain the impression from the Gospel, that God is in his nature placable, that his disposition towards man is benevolent, that he needed nothing to move him to treat us with compassion and mercy? In the same degree, then, that that doctrine conflicts with this impression, its intrinsic probability is diminished. Now, that it does, in some degree, conflict with it, inasmuch as it appears to represent God, not as inherently and immutably placable and willing to save mankind, — the very word *propitiating* implies it, — but as rendered so by the intervention and sacrifice of his son, cannot be disputed. It bears, therefore, on its face a certain degree of improbability. What construction, we may then inquire, can justly be put on this language, that shall not conflict with the impression just mentioned, nor imply the truth of the doctrine in question? That the words *propitiation*, *sacrifice*, *ransom*, and others of a similar import, are used by the apostles in speaking of the death of Christ is true. Now, are they used in a literal or figurative sense? Do they declare or only illustrate a truth? Are they employed to state a particular doctrine or only to elucidate a general truth? Clearly, I think, the latter. When I meet with them they immediately suggest the thought that the writers were Jews, conversant with all the rites of the Jewish institution, accustomed to express themselves on subjects of religion in a style corresponding with their educa-

tion and habits, and likely to borrow their imagery from what was so sacred and at the same time so familiar to them. I remember, too, that they were Jews addressing men, both in their own nation and of the Gentiles, to whom sacrifice and oblation were the first law, and addressing them with the desire of making the new religion acceptable to them, and of impressing upon them a sense of the great benefits with which it was fraught. It would be natural in doing this that they should select the more striking ceremonies and obvious advantages of the old dispensation to illustrate the blessings of the new. If, for example, a sin-offering, under the old dispensation, were the appointed mode of expressing penitence, and obtaining pardon, it would be natural for them to illustrate the effects of the death of Christ by calling it a sin-offering and a propitiation for sin. And this they might very properly do. For its effect on the sinner, who soberly contemplates it, is not unlike that of the ancient sin-offering. It humbles him; it gives him repentance; it inspires him with hope; it raises his heart to God. This practice of illustrating and recommending Christianity, by tracing out analogies and parallels between it and Judaism, no intelligent reader of the New Testament can fail to have observed. The Epistle to the Hebrews is composed almost entirely of such parallels and analogies. In some instances they are very striking; while in others it is difficult to see their precise force and propriety, owing, in part, undoubtedly, to our want of acquaintance with the associations existing in the mind of a Jew with the ritual of his venerable religion.

These considerations must be applied to all the language of the New Testament, which is of a *sacrificial*

import, and may help us to give it the just interpretation. Such interpretation cannot clash with those views of the Creator, which are spread over the whole Gospel, as they are over the glorious face of the heavens, in the most luminous traces, as if to put an end to mistake and to make doubt impossible.

I find no authority, then, either in scripture or in reason for going any farther on this subject than all Christians can go together. The way beyond is rough and crooked and dark. At the same time I shall not presume to deny that other ends than those which have been mentioned, and more important even than those, — ends which human thought has not yet conceived, and which, indeed, will not be disclosed to us, till this mortal has put on immortality, — were accomplished by the death of Christ. This is possible, nay, not improbable. But we can appreciate only such ends as we can clearly see. Those which are merely conjectural, or only probable, we cannot accept as self-evident or demonstrated verities. The most that can be expected of us is to admit that they *may* be true.

I have now finished my design. The subject occupies so high a place in Christianity, and fills so large a space in doctrinal theology, as to entitle it to the most serious consideration of all Christians, and to any efforts that may be necessary to elucidate it and restore it to the pale of good sense.

And here let me say, in conclusion, that if we desire to cultivate the affections of the Gospel, to grow in love and charity with all our fellow believers, it behoves us to dwell on those views of Christianity, those great, undisputed, indisputable truths, in which all are united, and not to insist too positively on those about which we differ. If we desire

to put an end to the influence of the selfish, disturbing, earthly passions, and to instal principle and truth in their place, we must not be strangers nor infrequent pilgrims in thought to the Cross, from which we are taught, as with the dying words of a "greater than a prophet," how we ought to deny and forget ourselves, and to love one another. The Cross of Jesus! it is the star of the world, — not destined to disappear like that material, moving orb, which illustrated his birth, but fixed and changeless like the eternal sun. Let us stand under it and look up with reverence and faith. The Cross of Jesus! let the thought of it come to us like the visits of a guardian angel whenever in our trials and sorrows we are unsubmissive to the will of Heaven, and soothe us to resignation and trust. The Cross of Jesus! let the remembrance of it rise up and rebuke us whenever we become careless of the claims of that great law of love which was established on an eternal foundation, when he "died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." The Cross of Jesus! let it appear before us, as another conscience, whenever we are found straying from the path of innocence and virtue, neglecting duty, giving countenance to impiety or settling down in sin, and recall us to him "who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

1st Series. No. 157.

THE

ONE THING NEEDFUL.

By Rev. THOMAS B. FOX.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

August, 1840.

Price 3 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, SCHOOL STREET.

ONE THING NEEDFUL.

YES! reader! one thing is *needful.* Many things are pleasant, many things desirable, many things useful, many things important, but one thing is needful: that is, a heart right in the sight of God and at peace with man,—that is, faith in Jesus our Saviour,—that is, religion. Without it we are "troubled about many things." There are griefs to be borne without comforts, joys to pass away without hope, passions to be restrained without strength, existence to be endured without purpose. Without it a little excitement, a few years of activity, transitory pleasures, an earthly soul, a painful death, a sinner's doom, are our all. But with it, sorrow comes to bless, immortal hope lights up the future, the soul's energies are the soul's servants, and life is a pleasant pilgrimage to a pleasant home. With it, there is joy unspeakable, there is elevation of spirit, years of benevolent action, a glorious passing-away to heaven and bliss that never ends. Without religion, man is the powerless victim of the storms of life, or the deluded devotee of its hurtful

pleasures. With religion, man is the heir of eternity, the brother of angels, the friend of Jesus, the child of God. I speak no fable. Ye who will not have Christ to rule over you, I speak no fable. Sophistry will not always choke the voice of conscience. The voice of boisterous mirth, the calls of business, the health and merriment of youth, the iron nerves, the bold heart, the reckless temper, cannot last forever; the hour cometh to all of you, when the folly, the madness of your sin and indifference, shall be made manifest; when the mortal relations of the spirit shall be broken up; when the eye of God, with the searching brightness of the meridian sun, shall look into every soul: then, no ridicule will be heard, no money will bribe, no courage endure, but you shall feel, shall confess, shall proclaim as a warning to others, one thing is needful. Oh! choose that good part which shall not be taken away.

This is a solemn truth, yet who believes it? Does that young man believe it, who violates the holy sabbath, who spends his nights in the streets in revelry, or in search of vain amusements, who opens not his bible, who breathes not one prayer, and who scoffs at holy things? Does that young woman believe it, whilst pleasure and gaiety, dress and flattery, are her deities? Does that merchant believe it, whilst the "cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches," are choking the word of God within him? Reader! do you, does any body believe it, whilst earth and earthly things are so engrossing; whilst there is so much bitterness and so little love; so much vain talk and so little prayer; so much thought of self and so little care for others; so much sin and so little holiness; in fine, whilst the gospel of Christ, the

example of Christ, the preaching of Christ, the goodness of God, the fear of judgment, are so powerless on our souls? Alas! men feel not their need of religion. They seek it not earnestly. Like Martha, "they are cumbered about much serving," even when they can sit at Jesus' feet and hear his word. Be it not so with us — but let us press home to our bosoms every consideration, which will impress upon us the needfulness of love to God and man: of a constant reference of our whole selves to the future, of a life of earnest prayer and purest practice. This is what we want. This is what we must have, if we would be well and happy. Let us remember, then, the things which belong to our peace. Let us consider, briefly, man's need of religion to support, enlighten and direct him.

I. Man needs religion, because this life is a state of discipline and full of temptation; within the soul are agitating passions and lawless appetites, without are the allurements of pleasure, the excitements of vice. Selfishness engrosses, riches enslave, avarice begs, ambition sounds its trumpet, lust craves continually, anger burns, hypocrisy cheats, and the soul's foes gather a numerous host, to destroy the soul's peace. Man is daily tempted, and daily yields to temptation. Here in the domestic circle, is the ungenerous reproach, the bitter word and the harsh temper. There in the place of merchandize, is dishonesty and deception. Again — in the halls of pleasure, there is giddiness and profanity, licentiousness and intoxication. In the place of power there is the mean and dreadful prostitution of the heaven-born soul to the lusts of dominion. Temptation invades the

sanctuary of home, stands at the corners of the streets, visits the secret chambers of the soul, enters the church of God, stirs up the evil desires, the unholy temper of man, poisons the springs of his life, and throws over him the deceitfulness of hypocrisy. It has an allurement fitted for every character and every condition. To riches it offers luxury, to poverty, crime, to the miser, gold, to the youth, pleasure. It ministers to the pride of some, to the vanity of others, to the weakness of all. It offers, in fine, anything and all things, if we will but fall down and worship sin. Many are deceived; many consent. Oh! look abroad, reader, and see the ravages of temptation. How it has crowded yonder prison with its victims! How it has withered the peace of yonder family, with its pestilence! How it has banished that young man from society, doomed him to a life of shame, or to an early and dreadful grave! In fine, do you not see it daily? Is it not by your own side? Hear you not its whisper in your own ear? Comes not its wicked counsel to your own soul? Is not life one constant struggle with temptation? — Yes. Man is to be purified through labor and suffering. Heaven is to be won by hard and constant strife. Where shall he find fitting armor, to what weapon shall he trust? Will you, my friend, trust to your long tried integrity? So thought that man, whose chains clank upon the prison floor, or who is an outcast from among his fellows, — until poverty stared him in the face, until the bribe became thousands, and temptation whispered there is none to see. Will you trust to the law of honor? So did that poor wretch, who bears about the fire of revenge within him, or who has laid his bosom friend in the grave. Will you trust to public opinion?

So think the multitude who are wasting life in following fashion, in giddy pleasure, or in the pursuit of wealth. Will you trust to your cautious prudence? So have thought many whom sin hath enslaved. My friend, there is no sure trust in these things. The armor that is to defend man in this contest with the enemies of his soul, is from above: it is the "one thing needful." Oh then seek it. "Pray against temptation, carry the old man forth to the funeral with tears of repentance, bury him in the grave of Jesus; put on the new man, a new heart, a new understanding, new affections and excellent appetites of heaven, — then beauty shall be marble, riches dross, power vanity, ambition toil;" — then the massive chains of sin shall be broken asunder, and thou shalt come forth in the freedom of righteousness.

II. Man needs religion because he is afflicted. Who has never been a mourner? Who has not known misfortune? Has not every heart its own bitterness? Is there not some wound in every soul, which earth cannot heal? Some have followed friends and kindred to the grave. Others lament the sinfulness and ingratitude of those in whom their fondest affections centered. Many have been stretched upon a weary sick-bed, some have been cast down from affluence to poverty. All have found hopes delusive, had their plans frustrated, their cheeks bathed with tears. Amid all the bustle and gaiety of life, there is heard the sigh and mourning of the bereaved. Reader, when your turn for sadness comes, do you not feel the need of a comfort from on high; do you not realize, that naught but a hope, which passes beyond the grave, which goes forward into eternity, can cheer you in

this hour? In a word, do you not feel, now, your need of religion, of a belief in Christ, that "your heart may not be troubled?"

And when you look around, is not the same truth impressed upon you? You see that miserable man. You notice his ragged garments, his bloated countenance, his eye without lustre, his unsteady and trembling step, his mind desolate and dark: Follow him home, enter his house of poverty, see his pale and heart-broken wife, his starved and naked children, hear his horrid oaths, mark the brutal blow, how the madman rages! Witness this, day after day, till the grave covers the victim of intemperance, and his family become the tenants of the almshouse. Now would you know why this is? Turn to that man's history. Ask his neighbors about his life. You will probably find that in the day of prosperity, he forgot his God and his Saviour. He was too proud, or too worldly, to be an humble and prayerful christian. He thought to pass life away without a cloud to shadow it. He was not in the sanctuary, no prayer arose from his family altar, he came not to his master's table, he knew not God. By and by, misfortunes came, his hopes were put out, his property fled, he was alone amidst desolation and darkness, for the light within him was extinguished. The consolations of the gospel were not for him. He had despised, rejected with contempt, its offers of salvation. In this sad condition, he seizes the wine-cup, he drowns his sorrows in its mad oblivion, he is a drunkard! and lives and dies like the brutes. This is no fancy. You have seen and heard of such cases, where affliction has driven the irreligious to intemperance. You have heard too of the suicide, who sunk beneath his

burden of wretchedness. You have gone into families, where death has come and left despair, because there was no readiness to meet him. Perhaps you have been by the side of the dying, when the soul was about to depart, and have heard the shrieks, seen the struggle, witnessed the last agony of one whom no faith in Jesus strengthened for that strange hour. And in all this you have read man's need of religion, to enable him to endure the sorrows of life, to meet the event of death. Reader! have you profited by such scenes, or go you on thoughtless still, hoping to escape all sorrow? Alas, how vain your hope! — Heard you ever of the man who needed no affliction to chasten him? Heard you ever of a life of unalloyed happiness on earth? Oh no! Sorrow is the lot of all. It is the lot of the young. Parents must die, friends must depart, sickness must be borne, — the world will mistake, and though the young feel never so strong, and laugh never so gay, the gloom of sadness will visit them. It is the lot of fathers and mothers. There are many pleasant families on earth, many with whom joy hath thus far been a dweller. But it will not, it cannot be so always, nor long. Death will be among them, those happy circles shall be broken up. The parent's pride shall be humbled, and the parent's heart wrung. The bright eyes of childhood shall be dimmed with tears or closed forever. They cannot escape. The garb of mourning which clads so many, declares they cannot escape it. It will come to all. All must suffer, all must be afflicted; and religion alone will support them. Be warned, then, dear reader. Raise up by prayer a firm trust in God. Go often to him who was touched with a feeling of human infirmities. Press onward every hour in the

christian's course. Then when trouble comes, you will know it to be heaven-sent. Then when you bend over the grave, lamenting the loved and the lost, a weeping Saviour will mingle his tears with yours, and cheer your heart with the glorious words — thy "brother shall rise again; whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

III. Man needs religion because he is immortal. Man is not alone the tried and tempted being of time. There is an eternity, an endless, on-spreading eternity before him. There is a future, full at least of uncertainty; for, even though there were nothing to prove that we are immortal, there is nothing to prove that we are not. Atheists say, that man shall crumble into dust, and be a conscious being no longer. But how know they this? Do these men, who would dethrone the Almighty, and bring chaos back again upon the world, — do these men ever think that the same chance or fortuitous combination of circumstances which brought them into this world, may carry them into another; that, that which caused them to be now, may cause them to be hereafter; that the matter now organized to make a mortal man, may be reorganized to make an immortal man? Do these men think of this? If not, then have they yet to learn, that though they deny the existence of God, though they raise up some undefinable *nothing* to create and rule this universe, still they have no assurance, that the sleep of the grave is eternal and their miserable hope of annihilation is at an end.

On the scheme of the atheist then, man *may* be immortal. And when a healthy and enlightened reason

acts upon this subject, how strong is the presumption that he is so! Who can think of the soul and its marvellous powers; who can take cognizance of his thoughts as they survey and analyze their dwelling-place, the mind, or as they go over creation, call back the past or penetrate the future; who can contemplate the affections in their loveliness and strength, in their holy self-denial, and unfailing constancy, as they blend in one congenial spirit; who can study the sentiment of devotion, feel how it elevates, fills with rapture, forgets earth and soars to heaven, who can see our capacity, our ever increasing capacity, for knowledge and virtue, can mark the ceaseless progress in good or evil of the principle within, without being almost assured that it will never cease to be? And how will this assurance be strengthened, when he reflects, that on earth, there is not a people, who have not some hope, more or less abiding and definite, of another state of existence!

The light of nature then affords strong presumption that man is immortal, and christianity makes this presumption fact, that teaches to the believer beyond question, the everlasting existence of his soul. Now, since this great truth is thus taught, who does not feel the need of that which shall explain the conditions of this endless life, and prepare him for it. Surely, not one who has the power, and who has exercised the power of thought. It is a fearful thing to live forever; to go on, not for a few days, months and years, but for a period that hath no end nor pause, a conscious feeling soul. And no man can dwell upon the fact of his immortality, as long, as intensely as he ought, without craving knowledge of the future state, without seeking a guide to direct him concerning

1st Series. No. 158.

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION.

By Rev. C. W. UPHAM.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

September, 1840.

Price 4 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, SCHOOL STREET.

REGENERATION.

For several years past, there has been a respite from the theological controversies which for a long time before had occupied the attention of the churches and people of this part of the country. It becomes us now to pause, and contemplate the condition in which it has left the religious community. Such a review will be very encouraging to the friends of rational Christianity. It will show a great progress of truth.

When this controversy began, the prevailing system of theology in the churches was Calvinistic. It recognised the doctrine of election, with its accompanying tenets — such as the irresistible influence of the spirit, and the impossibility of falling from grace; the imputation of Adam's sin, upon the whole body of his descendants, and the inability of all, except the elect, to escape from its fatal influence. In the earlier stages of the controversy, these doctrines were advocated with great energy, as the essential principles of orthodoxy, and the peculiar and

distinguishing features of the gospel. They are now all abandoned in this part of the country. They are believed by but few of the people, and are seldom urged by the clergy. For this we ought to be thankful. In removing them from the common belief, a great deal has been done towards restoring the gospel to its original simplicity, purity and power, and rescuing the minds of men from indifference, infidelity and despair.

The doctrine of the trinity, also, has ceased, in a great measure, to be a topic of controversy, and has given place to a much improved state of opinion on the subject. While the opposers of the doctrine have been led to more clear and delightful, more consistent and elevated views of the Savior, it is not venturing much to say, that throughout all the denominations which have maintained it, there is a general and a growing tendency among intelligent and reflecting men, to admit that the declarations of Jesus Christ were not without meaning, when he said, "my Father is GREATER than I." Serious and devout people are becoming convinced of the supremacy of the Father. Would that the hearts of men of all denominations, were filled with a deeper and more effectual love and adoration of him! Would that all, of every sect, exhibited in this respect, a nearer resemblance of him who came to "give us an example," and whose soul was at all times the abode of a holy and reverent sentiment of piety towards "his Father and our Father, his God and our God!"

In order to illustrate more fully, the correctness of the opinion, just advanced, that the great controversies of the day, have resulted in an abandonment, or in an essential modification, of the system of Calvinism, and in the

general diffusion and firm establishment of some of the most important principles of rational Christianity, I request the attention of the reader to the following discussion of the doctrine of Regeneration. It will be gratifying to discover how far on this subject controversy has fulfilled its design in diminishing the points of difference among Christians. It is of the highest importance that we secure the ground we have won, place ourselves where error and delusion cannot again reach us, and bring our minds into such a state of clear conviction, as to give to truth and duty their rightful power over our hearts and lives.

The effect produced upon a person, by the reception of the christian religion into the heart, and its application to the life, is described in the language of familiar use, by the word Regeneration. When rightly understood, this word expresses the change, wrought by the spirit of the gospel, with great fitness and felicity. It becomes us to understand it aright, when using it ourselves, or when listening to its use by others.

Let us begin by inquiring of the scriptures. The idea conveyed by the word Regeneration, is embraced in a great variety of expressions. The following are some of them: "Born again" — "Born of God" — "Born of the spirit" — "Renewed" — "Created anew" — "A new creature."

The same idea is also conveyed under the image of that last great change through which we all hope to pass, the resurrection from the grave. "You, being dead in your sins, hath he quickened, together with him." "If ye then be risen with Christ." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him

that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but *is passed from death unto life.*" "We know that we have passed from death unto life."

Now, no principle of interpretation can be more sound or certain, than this; where the same idea is compared with two or more different objects, the comparison must be considered as confined to those particular points of view in which there is a resemblance between the objects with which the idea is compared. The application of this principle to the present case, shows us that christian regeneration can only "resemble birth into this life," and "reanimation into the future life," in those respects in which they are similar. The sum and substance of the meaning that can be drawn from the scriptural use of these phrases, to describe regeneration, must be considered, therefore, as simply this: It signifies, "a great change in our condition and characters;" the passing from one state of being into another and a better.

No Christian, it is probable, would be unwilling to admit, that just so far as we receive the gospel, in its genuine spirit, into our hearts, we bring about a most important change in our feelings, motives, and principles; or, in other words, that in approaching the standard of the gospel, as it exists in the example and instructions of Jesus Christ, we are passing into a better moral and spiritual state. Thus far, therefore, we can all come together. In entering upon a more particular examination of the subject, inquiries are suggested, with respect to some of which, Christians have heretofore differed, and with respect to others of which, they still continue to differ. All the important topics included within its boundaries, will be found to be embraced in the following questions.

1st. By whose agency is regeneration brought about?

2dly. Does it produce, or suppose, any essential change in our natures, meaning by "nature," our intellectual and moral constitution, or, as it was called by the older writers, "our make?"

3dly. By what means is it to be effected?

4thly. What is the nature, or general description of the effect it produces upon the character?

I. I proceed to inquire, in the first place, by whose agency we are spiritually renewed.

Formally, as is well known, it was the prevailing and orthodox opinion, that in this great work, *we* are entirely passive. That we contribute nothing towards its accomplishment, — that we do not operate, but are altogether operated upon, by the extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, — that we cannot retard, or resist, or hasten, or in any way affect our regeneration, — that it is altogether and exclusively the work of God.

On such a point as this, it is the dictate of wisdom, as well as duty, to refer to the scriptures for a decision.

In looking through the Bible, for this purpose, I acknowledge that many expressions occur which, at first view, seem to sustain the above opinion. The strongest of these expressions will be set before the reader, that he may possess all the means of judging for himself, fairly and intelligently, what is the doctrine of the word of God. Such expressions as the following, and which have been already quoted, are used to characterize the event of regeneration: "Born again" — "Born of God" — "Born of the spirit" — "Renewed" — "Created anew" — "A new creature."

We are said to be "dead in trespasses and sins."

Christ says, "without me, ye can do nothing."

It is also said "no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him." In one of the prophets, we read, "turn thou us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned."

God is represented as "giving faith and repentance unto life," and he promiseth to "write his law in the hearts of his people, — to put it into their inward parts." The apostle says, "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do;" and it is also said by the apostle, "By grace we are saved, lest any man should boast."

It is believed that the above are among the strongest texts that can be brought to prove the passiveness of man in the work of conversion. It is freely admitted, that, if we were to confine our attention solely to these passages, it would seem to be established beyond question. But we have no right to confine our observation, in pursuing a scriptural inquiry, to a few insulated passages. We must weigh and consider the general tenor of the sacred writings, the great principles of revealed religion, and the whole testimony of the Bible as uttered in all its parts and passages.

The general tenor of scripture is opposed to the idea that man is naturally unable to obtain regeneration by his own efforts. Throughout the revealed and recorded word of God, we are addressed as though we were already actually in possession of the powers and faculties necessary to hear and to obey the requisitions of religion. Over the whole face of scripture, we are evidently supposed to be susceptible, naturally, of religious affection, and to be free and capable agents in commencing and conducting the work of the Spirit. It seems, also, to be irrelevant

to dispute, or to doubt about, an *ability* to become religious, while it is certain, that from the beginning to the end of the Bible, the voice of God calls upon us, and *commands* to become, religious.

The whole system of revelation proceeds upon the idea that man is capable of religious impression and affection. Why have the dispensations of religion been instituted? Why have truths been urged upon his belief? Why have appeals been made to his feelings? Surely all this would not have been done, had he been incapable of being affected, — had his nature been unsusceptible of religious impression.

In opposition, therefore, to the opinion that man can do nothing towards his own conversion, I bring, in the first place, the uniform, current and prevailing sense of scripture, every where implied, and often expressed, and the very meaning and design of the system of revealed religion.

What, then, it may be asked, is to be done with those texts which seem to declare our entire inability, and to attribute the whole work of regeneration to God? What do they mean? Is it possible that some passages of scripture are contradictory to other passages, or to its prevailing sense? In answer to these questions, I would observe, that the passages of which we are treating, are capable of an easy and natural interpretation, without supposing them to carry their meaning so far as some have thought, and as, perhaps, to a superficial reader of the scriptures; they may seem to carry it.

Those passages, for instance, which speak of regeneration as a "creation," do not imply that man is passive in bringing it about. This is evident, from the use of such

expressions, in various parts of scripture. God is said to have "created Jacob and formed Israel," when he constituted that particular family his church and people. But the house of Israel was not passive in this transaction. They took an active and necessary part in carrying it into effect, for we are told that they "entered into a covenant to have him for their God."

With respect to all those phrases, allusive to our natural birth into this life, an easy and perfectly satisfactory meaning readily suggests itself. It is well known, that among the Jews, it was a common use of language, to denominate thóse who had become proselytes to their religion, "new born babes," "born in holiness," &c. To become a proselyte to a sect or party, was to "become a new creature." There was no more intelligible or familiar phrase than this among the Jews. Hence the surprise of our Lord, when Nicodemus misunderstood his meaning, in using the expression "born again." "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things!" The meaning of these phrases, cannot, indeed, be misunderstood by any one who compares them all together. We are sometimes said to be "begotten by the word of God," and St. Paul tells the Corinthians, that he had "begotten them by the gospel."

So also do the phrases that speak of man as "dead in trespasses and sins," when taken together, explain themselves. "Death," in these cases, is used metaphorically, and the metaphor is not pressed with any degree of closeness. The spiritually dead are addressed as though they still retained their senses, and their freedom and activity of will. "Awake, thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life," says the apostle.

"Hear, and your souls shall live," says the prophet. "Turn yourselves, and ye shall live," says another prophet. The meaning of the word "dead," in the use in which I am now considering it, is fully illustrated by Paul, who not only speaks of the wicked as "dead in sin," but of the righteous "as dead to sin;" of the converted Jew as "dead to the law," and of the penitent and reformed, as "dead and crucified to the world." We can no more argue, therefore, that an unconverted man can do nothing towards his conversion, because he is said to be "dead in sin," than we can argue that a converted man cannot commit sin, because he is said to be "dead to sin."

It will not do to interpret literally the passages of scripture which seem at first view to declare our inability. If we were to give such phrases a literal meaning, we should be under the necessity of denying the existence of every natural faculty. The power of "thinking," would be denied; for the apostle says that "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." I would here also observe, that in considering the import of such texts as this, "without me ye can do nothing," we must bear in mind the extraordinary gifts imparted or promised by our Lord, to his disciples, in the first age of his church, such as the power of working miracles, of speaking with tongues, &c.

The meaning of the word "draw," in such texts as this, "no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him," is explained by other scriptures, where God is said to "draw," not by an irresistible exertion of his power, but by "the cords of love," and where men are said to be "drawn aside by their own lusts."

When we read that God "giveth repentance," "giveth faith," &c. we should remember that he "commandeth all men every where to repent," and that "this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of the Son of God." We must also remember that a strict and literal interpretation of such passages of scripture, will attribute directly to God, the wickedness of men, for he is said to have "given them a spirit of slumber," and it is also said "the Lord hath given a lying spirit in the mouth of all thy prophets." A mode of interpretation, that leads to such results, needs no comment to make it obvious to every devout mind, that it is a false mode.

Our Lord represents himself "as knocking at the doors of men's hearts," but as entering in, only where they throw them open to receive him. Notwithstanding the prayer of Ephraim, "Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned," we are still called upon to "turn to the Lord our God," and "to make ourselves a new spirit." Rewards are promised to the penitent, "because he considereth, and turneth away from his iniquity;" and the people are reproached because they "turn not to him that smiteth them," and will not "leave their doings to turn to the Lord."

The word "worketh," in such phrases as the following, "God worketh in us both to will and to do," is constantly used to signify a natural, moral operation, as in this instance, "faith worketh by love."

I might go on in the same manner, were it necessary, and show that every text, which has been thought to prove our passiveness, and the exclusive agency of the spirit of God put forth in extraordinary exercise, in the work of regeneration, when compared with other texts, and with

the common use of language in scripture, comes far short of proving these points.

If it be asked whether we attribute the whole work of conversion to man, and give none of the glory to God; it is answered that we do not ascribe the whole to man, or take the glory from God. In one sense, we ascribe it all to God. We do not deny to God the power of impressing or affecting a mind, as to him may seem fit; we we do not deny that in some instances, persons have been the subjects of such special influences. But we say that there is no reason for men to depend upon, or to expect any extraordinary interference or operation of the spirit of God upon their souls, without the use on their part, and in the first place, of the means of spiritual improvement he has provided for them. All we can rely upon, is *a co-operation of God's spirit, in such measure as may be needed, with an industrious and devout use of the means of grace, regularly appointed, and made known to us, and freely offered to all.* This we may confidently rely upon.

We are not, in matters of religion, any more than in other things, to expect the further assistance of God, while we neglect to use the assistance he has already provided for us. It is only when the ground has been ploughed, and enriched, and planted, and watched over with care and labor, that a harvest can be expected. So it is with the spiritual husbandman. He cannot expect to gather in the fruits, unless he has carefully sown the good seed, and cherished, and cultivated, and guarded its growth. Paul must first plant, and Apollos must water, before God will give the increase.

The great rule which explains the whole, is this: —

When God is said, in scripture, to give any thing, the previous exercise on our part, of the faculty suited to its attainment, is always supposed. Thus the expressions — "God giveth his spirit," or "giveth repentance," or "giveth faith," are to be understood precisely as we understand this scripture, "God giveth riches."—To whom does he give riches? To the industrious, the persevering, the temperate, the prudent, and the skilful. That is, he gives the faculties for acquiring riches, and blesses their exercise. So also it is said, "God giveth wisdom." But to whom? "To the man of understanding," to him who "inclines his ear to hear it, and applies his heart to understanding," "who cries after knowledge," "and lifts up his voice for understanding, and seeks for her as for silver, and searcheth for her as for hid treasure."

The answer to the first question into which the subject was divided, *by whose agency is regeneration brought about?* is two-fold. In the first place it is God's work. He giveth us, in the established means of grace, all the powers and facilities necessary to produce it. In the second place, it is man's work. It will not as a general rule, take place until man has applied himself to the use of those means; and whenever he does properly and faithfully use them, it will surely be effected.

It is, then, the doctrine of scripture, *that, in the regeneration of our spirits, to a life of virtue and piety, God and man co-operate.* The former imparting the requisite ability, presenting the appropriate motives, providing the instruments, and blessing their exercise; and the latter applying the means, with all his mind, and heart, and strength. I hope that the views now presented will serve to satisfy the reader, with reference to the point, the par-

ticular discussion of which is here concluded. The examination has been chiefly confined to the scriptures, because it is thought that such questions can only be clearly and decisively settled by restricting the range of discussion and argument to this channel.

II. The second question for consideration is this: Does regeneration produce or suppose any essential change in our natures? This is the point with respect to which there has been heretofore the most earnest controversy among theologians. It is intimately connected with the previous question. For, it is obvious, if a radical and essential change in our nature is requisite, we certainly cannot bring it about, and it must be ascribed to God's special and immediate agency. We cannot add in the least to our stature, or change the color of a single hair on our heads. Of course it cannot be imagined that we can alter or add to the faculties of our spiritual frame. If, on the other hand, it be determined that the *special* interference of God's Spirit is not necessary for our regeneration, and does not generally take place, it is consequently settled that no essential alteration of our natures is needed to produce it.

Upon the strength of the conclusion to which we arrived in discussing the previous question, I might therefore consider the present question as already decided in the negative. But I prefer to sustain each of the points, which have been proposed for examination, by distinct and separate proofs; so that they may not only have a foundation upon which to stand together, but a solid support upon which they can severally rest, without any dependence upon each other.

I proceed therefore to prove that in regeneration, our natures pass through no radical change. It is hardly necessary to make quotations from scripture for this purpose. All those passages which allude to it, speak of it as an effect to be produced *upon us as we are.* The means, to the use of which it is promised, are all means which we are naturally capable of using. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Are we not all capable of asking, seeking, knocking? We find nothing about a new power or a new affection being requisite before making the attempts to which in these words, success is promised. On the contrary, the assurance is given, that if we make suitable exertions, success will certainly attend and crown our efforts. If we ask, and seek, and knock, — if we inquire and endeavor — if we labor, and watch and pray, we have the promise of the Savior, that the blessings of his spirit shall descend upon us.

From the preaching of John the Baptist, through all the recorded exhortations of Jesus and his disciples, we find men uniformly addressed as though they already possessed in their natures all that was necessary to enable them to "come to Christ," and to "win Christ." Look at Paul's discourse on Mars' hill. He makes no allusion to any change to be wrought in the moral constitutions of the heathens to whom he then spake. On the contrary he expresses his belief that all they wanted was *information;* that the difficulty with them was not a natural inability, or a natural hostility to the truth,— that it was not either a carnal or a hardened heart of unbelief,—

but ignorance, and ignorance only. "The times of this *ignorance* God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent." He goes so far as to declare, what the history of man determines to be true, that we are by nature prone to religion; that God has so made us as to be disposed to seek after him, and capable of discerning him; "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him." Indeed it is so obviously the meaning of all scripture, that we are in our natural state capable of religious affection, and that all that is needed to awaken that affection is the application of our moral and intellectual faculties to its contemplation, that it is difficult to select any one passage that would enforce it more strongly and emphatically than all the rest.

I proceed therefore, to present some general considerations in favor of the opinion that we are by nature capable of religious faith and affection.

To suppose the contrary, is arguing against the wisdom of God, and the perfection and simplicity of his works. All believe that we were created for immortality, and if so we were adapted by our Creator, for religion. Religion is the only subject in which we have any interest in that view of our nature in which it extends beyond the grave.

The Bible says that we were made in the image of God; that we are his offspring, and that our souls are intended to be perpetual living temples, from which worship is to ascend to him. And still, notwithstanding all this we are told by some divines, and find it asserted in some creeds, that the natural man cannot know God, —that he is incapable of contemplating his attributes, of

comprehending his truth, and of exercising towards him the affections appropriate to the relations of a creature, a subject, and a child.

We are told that all the miracles that have been performed, all the sublime supernatural events that transpired in the course of the revelations which God has made to man, all the motives, promises, encouragements, precepts, warnings, persuasions, exhortations and truths conveyed by those revelations are utterly useless and unavailing, until another miracle has been wrought upon each individual mind in remodelling it, which miracle, if performed, renders all that has been done besides and before, entirely unnecessary and superfluous. We have, in short, the infinitely wise and all powerful Creator represented as calling us into being, and intending us to bear his image, and to love him as children should love a Father, while, at the same time, he so frames us as to be incapable of loving or knowing him; destining us for a certain purpose, and so constituting us as to render us unable to accomplish that purpose. And although thus unable, addressing to us, in a series of wonderful dispensations, motives and commands to endeavor to accomplish it, and then, after all this immense and lavish expenditure of means to produce an effect which he had previously placed beyond their reach, to crown the whole, we have him represented as producing that effect by a distinct and independent exercise of his sovereign power! And still, while it is declared that the use of the means is wholly unavailing, we are required to continue their use with as much earnestness as though it was believed that they were efficacious.

These are some of the results flowing immediately

from the supposition that we are by nature averse to, or incapable of religion, and that a special act of the divine power is in all cases necessary before we can become susceptible of christian regeneration. Surely no doctrine, at least no doctrine which is not by the universal consent of learned and devout commentators declared to be taught in scripture, can be maintained which involves to this extent the character of the administration of God's moral government!

The conclusion to which we are brought in considering the second question is, that regeneration in the gospel sense, does not suppose any essential change in the faculties, the principles, or the structure of our original natural moral constitution—does not destroy nor diminish, nor add to the primary springs either of thought or affection.

Before leaving this department of our subject I would observe, that with respect to the points involved in the questions already discussed, the friends of rational christianity have abundant occasion to congratulate themselves and the church at large upon the success which has crowned their efforts in the controversy to which reference was made at the beginning of these pages. It is now generally admitted that every man has the opportunity and power of becoming converted;—that whatever means are requisite, or whatever operations of the divine spirit are needed, are equally promised to all, freely offered to all, and within the reach of all. It is declared that men must not wait in indolence for the special influences of the Spirit, but that it is in every man's power, at any time to be "born again." Nay it is affirmed that it is an extremely easy and brief process to be "born again"!

While liberal christians cannot, in conscience, represent this great work as quite so summary a process, as that it can be accomplished in a moment, or an hour, or a day, or a week, they have always maintained that every person to whom the sound of the gospel has come, is able to acquire the christian character, and secure the christian's reward,—that all can do what all are required to do,—that whatever additional or special operations of the divine Spirit are needed to produce conversion, are promised to all who seek them, and that they will surely accompany or follow the faithful use of means already provided, by whomsoever those means are used.

These views were at the outset resisted. Those who held them were denounced. They were denied the christian name. They were driven from the fellowship of the clergy and from the communion of the churches. It was then maintained by the orthodox, as they assume to call themselves, that conversion was altogether the work of the Spirit of God, extraordinarily put forth,—that human efforts were entirely unavailing to bring it about,—that it occurred in special cases, and could occur in no other cases,—that it was the effect of a divine influence which we could not hasten or retard, or in any way affect. These views are now generally abandoned, and "all men, every where," as in the days of the great forerunner, and of the apostle to the gentiles, are called upon to repent and be converted, and it is declared that all have it in their power to repent and be converted.

If then it depends mainly upon us whether we be converted,—if God has already provided the requisite means and aids,—if further assistances of his Spirit, so far as they may be needed, are only to be expected *after* the

use on our part of the means in our possession, and may *then* confidently be expected, the next question that suggests itself, is the third into which the subject was proposed to be divided.

III. By what means is regeneration to be effected? In this question, and it is obvious that it is the great practical question, there is a wide disagreement between the friends of rational christianity and most of the orthodox denominations in the country. All that it is expedient for me to do is to state the means which appear to me to be scriptural, just, and proper. Some of these means are appointed by God himself. The Sabbath is pre-eminently one of them.

It is the design of the Sabbath to give men an opportunity, by relinquishing the labors and cares of life, to devote without interruption, one day in seven to the acquisition of religious knowledge, to the purposes of social worship, to devout meditation in secret, to silent communion with God, to the pure and beneficent exercise of the social and domestic affections, and to the general cultivation of their nature in its highest aspects and relations.

I would recommend, therefore, to all who are desirous of becoming converted, a faithful observance of the Lord's day. It is not set apart by the contrivance of men, it rests upon the appointment of God himself.

I would recommend to all the following mode of spending and improving this hallowed season. Let it be introduced by private and by family prayer, let its earlier hours be devoted to the perusal of the word of God, and other good books,—to devout meditation, and to the exercise

of the purest affections towards all who dwell with us beneath the same roof. Let the parent apply himself to instruct the conscience, to lead out the thoughts, and to improve the affections of his child. Let the objects presented to the mind and heart be such as are appropriate to the day. Let the altar of prayer and the seat of instruction be found side by side in every dwelling. Let a devout silence and tranquillity rest upon the whole family. Let love to God and love to man beam from every countenance. At the appointed hours let the united family move together in stillness and reverence to the house of God, and there let them, in company with their friends and neighbors, seek his face and favor, listen to his word, meditate upon his truth, and deepen their own impressions of religious duty. At the close of the public services of the day let them ponder upon what they have heard, and compare it with the word God, and with that reason which he has given to enlighten every man that cometh into the world. Let them make it their own by meditating upon it and by impressing it durably upon their minds, so that it will manifest itself ever after in their lives and conversation. Let the last hours of the day be consecrated to the virtuous and happy exercise of social and benevolent affection. Let the cords of love, the ties of home, of family, of consanguinity, of good neighborhood, be drawn closer round the heart; an when the head is laid to rest upon the pillow, let grateful, devout and holy sentiments and supplications press the seal of God's approbation upon a day well spent.

If we thus improve our Sabbaths, we may be that our Father will delight to shed down upon our souls

his richest blessings. We may confidently indulge the hope that our hearts will experience the influence of his Holy Spirit, and that we shall be truly and effectually converted to him. Whatever contrivances men may invent, whatever arrangements they may make, however great an excitement they may succeed in creating, by setting apart other days than that appointed by God, we may be sure that the Sabbath properly spent, will be at least as effectual as any of them to arrest us in the ways of sin, to turn our thoughts and affections from the follies of the world to the solemn interests of the soul, and to convert us to a life of virtue and religion. Whatever assistance of the divine spirit may be needed in the conversion of souls, we may be sure it will be as freely vouchsafed on the Sabbath, hallowed by the appointment of him from whom all good influences descend, as during any meeting arranged and conducted by the contrivance of man. God has blessed, and will ever continue to bless his own holy day.

The reader will perceive that I do not recommend the multiplication of public meetings on the Lord's day. If we continue to observe, as our fathers did, the usual services of the sanctuary, perhaps the remaining hours of the Sabbath may be better spent in some such manner as I have described than by assembling the congregation for the third time in the same day. I am much disposed to think that two discourses, together with the topics of reflection suggested by the other exercises, are as much as a common memory will bear away with distinctness, or the understanding fully digest, or the heart effectually apply in one day.

It is a great mistake to suppose that all religion con-

sists in frequenting churches, or in hearing preaching. If what is heard in public is not meditated upon in private, compared with scripture and reason by the individual listener, and laid up carefully in the memory in order to be practiced in the life, it becomes perfectly worthless. It is literally and solely the "hearing of the ear," an empty sound, a concussion of the air, an impulse upon the auditory nerve; this is all — and this is nothing. The passions perhaps will be awakened, the nerves agitated, the sensibilities aroused, but the soul will not be moved from its depths, the mind will not be instructed, no solid principle of our nature will be affected; and when the fervors of the occasion shall have subsided, there will be great reason to apprehend, that the religious character founded upon them will have passed away also.

It was the principle of the catholic church that the only way in which the people could acquire the christian character, and receive religious impressions, was by frequenting the cathedrals and confessionals, and submitting themselves to the direction and dominion of the priests. It is the principle of protestants that every individual is to acquire his religious character for himself and by his own efforts, and to interpret the scriptures by the exercise of his own judgment. The consistent protestant, the only one who deserves the name, regards his minister as one appointed to counsel and assist rather than to judge and control, and weighs and compares what he may utter with reference to his own reason, enlightened and guided by scripture, and accepts or rejects it according to the decision of his own judgment.

The next means provided for the regeneration of man is the word of God. To every person, who is able to

read, and who is worthy of being considered a protestant christian, this should be the fountain and source of religious knowledge, impression and conviction. *The Bible ought to be the great instrument of conversion.* There is reason to fear that it is not so at the present day. The word of God speaks to him who applies his heart to its pages in a still, small voice. How seldom do its gentle but heavenly tones reach and convert the soul! It is in the crowded and agitated assembly, by the influence of a nervous and morbid excitement of the system produced by long continued meetings, where every thing contributes to affect the imagination and the passions, rather than in the closet, leaning in silence over the word of God, all the powers intent upon its meaning, and the whole soul thirsting for its spirit, that conversions are wont at present to take place. Instead of searching for light, and peace, and truth, where God has recorded his word, we see whole communities, abandoning their necessary occupations, relinquishing their habits of industry and economy, flocking round, hanging upon the lips and subjecting their minds and hearts unresistingly to the sway, of a few fallible and frail fellow mortals, who are strangers to them and to the wants of their souls, and who drive them by exciting denunciations and threatenings, and by reckless and violent assaults upon their fears and feelings, to sudden conclusions and convictions, which ought to have been the result of their most sober, calm, and deliberate meditations. The institutions of the gospel ministry, and of public worship, are of inestimable value, but it is a truly lamentable state of things when ministers and meetings are the only instruments of conversion. There must be a sad perversion of taste and

feeling in a christian community when the word of God, which in the days of the apostles was able to make men wise unto salvation, and was profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, has lost its power over the mind and heart. The Bible, which was once sharper than a two-edged sword when wielded by the arm of a spiritual champion, is getting to be a blunt and feeble instrument compared with the artificial weapons forged and wrought by the device and the cunning of men.

Prayer is one of the most effectual means of conversion. Not merely public prayer, as offered at crowded meetings under the excitement that attends multitudinous assemblages, but prayer, whenever it rises with sincerity, flowing from hearts, which are themselves at all times both a temple and an altar, and which have within them the spontaneous and inexhaustible fountains of devotion, prayer offered in secret, to him who seeth in secret. No one can be said to have the spirit of prayer, whose devotions are dependent upon external sympathy or aid; and he who feels that, to enjoy religious exercises, or to have his devotional feelings awakened, it is necessary to go to a meeting or listen to a minister, is indeed in a most dangerous way. He must be aroused from his delusion. Notwithstanding all the raptures he may experience in the congregation or the conference, he is really living without God in the world. God is far from him. He is a stranger to that God whom the Savior came to make known to us, and in whose bosom he dwelt. He knows not that God who is a spirit, and is to be worshipped in spirit, not only in Gerizim or in Jerusalem, but wherever there is a spirit that takes delight in communing with him. He knows not the God whom Jesus withdrew into the wilder-

ness to worship, whose presence he sought and enjoyed, while on the bosom of the lake of Galilee, and within the solemn midnight-shade of the mountain-forest, as well as in the synagogue or the temple.

Self-examination is another means of conversion. By self-examination I mean not a general and unreflecting aspersion of our own characters, or sweeping and vague censures against ourselves. I do not mean extravagant, insincere or unmeaning expressions of penitence and remorse. I do not mean the habit of speaking disparagingly of ourselves, in order to secure gratification for our pride and ambition, by gaining the praise of humility and lowliness of mind. But I mean a careful, patient, habitual, discriminating scrutiny of the life, disposition and character, with the view of confirming what is good, strengthening what is weak, and exterminating all that is evil. There can be no real, thorough, or effectual regeneration, unless such self-examination has been frequently and impartially exercised.

Finally, the faithful, modest, and industrious discharge of all the duties of life, with a constant reference to the will of God, and a sincere desire to secure his favor and blessing, is an important and most efficacious means of conversion to God. He whose whole life is regulated by a conscientious sense of duty, — who by patient continuance in well-doing seeks the divine approbation, — who instead of leaving his business and abandoning his duties to get religion, endeavors to bring his religion as largely as possible into all the concerns and occupations in which he may be engaged, and who devotes the six days which God has set apart for that express purpose, to persevering industry and honest labor, has taken a course that will be sure to bring down the best spiritual as well as temporal favors of Heaven.

These are, in brief, my views of the means of christian regeneration. It is a process into which no one ought to permit himself to be hurried or driven, — it is a process through which the Sabbaths as they succeed each other, the bible studied habitually, daily meditation, frequent prayer in private as well as in public, and the uniform practice of virtue and piety, in all the relations of life, must carry him. He must not think that it is a momentary or brief process. I trust that no rational or intelligent person will permit himself to be deceived into the idea that a transient agitation of the passions will carry him through it. Regeneration should not be considered as completed while sin remains. It should be carried on from one degree to another, and ought never to be looked upon as finished or secured until we have stood before the judgment seat of Christ. There ought not to be a period of anxiety, and then a period of hope, and then, after a few short days or hours perhaps, a period of listless security and lasting confidence. We ought always to be anxious, we ought always to hope with trembling. Instead of relying upon past experiences, we ought to strive with increased zeal and solicitude for future and still greater acquisitions in the christian life. Forgetting those things which are behind, we ought to press forward to those which are before. True conversion is not an event to be looked back upon with complacency and spiritual pride ; it is an object, the attainment of which should ever be placed in the future. It is a work to be begun early, but to be continued late ; it should last to the end of life. It is not a sudden and a completed change, — it is an indefinite progress, a perpetual growth in righteousness, peace, love, and all the fruits and graces of a holy spirit.

It is obvious that conversion, to be such a lasting, rather such an endless process, must be founded upon the most solid and durable principles of our nature. And here I come to the point on which the greatest difference of opinion, yet remaining on the subject of conversion, between unitarian and orthodox christians, is to be found.

We disapprove of all attempts to work upon the passions when in a roused or tumultuous state, to create a merely nervous excitement of the feelings and of the imagination, or to operate by an artificial system which from its very nature cannot be permanent. We think that, in inducing a man to become religious, to take an interest in the gospel, and to devote himself to its cause, none but his most sober and deliberate faculties should be addressed, — that conviction and conversion should be the result of the clearest exercises of the understanding and judgment, as well as of the deepest movements of the affections, — that religion ought to have its basis laid in the solid foundation of the intellect, the reason, the judgment, and the moral sense, as well as in the fears, fancies, sensibilities, or passions.

In looking at the human constitution, we learn that the feelings are in their nature fluctuating and insecure, — that they cannot endure a strong excitement for a long period, — that they consume themselves, — and that their action is necessarily an intermittent state of our being. We learn, too, that they exist in greater vivacity in one sex than in the other, in one individual of the same sex than in another, and therefore we cannot believe that the impartial and righteous Father, who has no respect for persons or classes, would have made them the appropriate channels through which to approach him and obtain his

favor. We learn, moreover, that the vigor and vivacity of the feelings decay as we pass beyond the boundaries of youth, and fade away as we approach serious, sober, and religious old age.

A christian character established upon the feelings, is therefore, it seems to us, like the house built by the foolish man, upon the sand. When the rains descended, and the winds blew, and the floods came, and beat upon that house, it fell, and great was the fall of it.

But the reason, the judgment, the conscience, endure forever. Each acquisition of knowledge confirms them; every scene of our being gives them exercise and strength; they grow with our growth, and appear to expand, as we advance in life, from youth to old age, as though ripening for a still wider development in the future world.

He who builds his religious character upon them, we liken to the wise man who built his house upon the rock. Let the rains descend, and the winds blow, and the floods come, and beat upon that house. It is all in vain. It will withstand every assault, and remain firm in the midst of the howling storm and the beating tempest, for it is founded upon a rock.

We consider the step of making a profession of the Christian name, and of espousing the Christian cause, as a most important, serious, and solemn transaction, as one which ought to be taken with the greatest caution, deliberation, and reflection. Regarding it in this light, we cannot, in conscience, purposely throw a person into the midst of a great excitement, and then prevail upon him, while in excitement, to take this step, any more than we could reconcile it to our consciences, to get a man excited, by any other cause, by strong drink for instance, and

then induce him to conclude a bargain, or sign a note, or enter into any civil contract or obligation of moment.

This leads me to express my astonishment at one aspect of the state and operation of things among the orthodox churches. The covenant to which the names of converts are required to be subscribed is so construed by their rules and practice of church discipline as to cause a departure from the speculative opinions it embraces, and a removal from the church of which it is the standard, to be considered as a breach of faith, and a violation of sacred vows. Of course, whoever sign those covenants, must be considered as surrendering their Christian liberty and bartering away their most precious rights. They also voluntarily place themselves in a situation where they will not be able to perform their Christian duties. For it is not only our undeniable privilege to study the scriptures for ourselves, and to form and express freely our views of christian truth, it is a most solemn, urgent, and perpetual duty. He who promises to adhere to a particular creed, or a particular church, all his life, throws away this privilege, and is false to this duty. I am astonished that so many can be induced to do what no Christian has a right to do, to give up their most sacred privileges, and bind themselves never to perform their most solemn duties. I am amazed when I see ministers, while the praises of liberty of conscience are on their lips, exhausting all their arts and energies in persuading, and hurrying, and driving the young, the ignorant, the confiding, and the conscientious into a snare with which Christians never ought to be entangled. I am shocked to see ministers avail themselves of the bewildering fervors of a local and artificial excitement in inducing those, whom Christ came to make free, to enter into obligations which are inconsistent with

christian duty, and subversive of all christian rights, and into which no individual can be morally justified in entering himself or in persuading another to enter.

We do not think it morally right, or scripturally correct, to throw a person into violent agitation by operating upon his fears, and depicting in strong colors the dreadful consequences that will ensue if he does not *immediately* devote himself to God. We cannot conceive how men can feel authorized to declare positively to a large assembly, that the day, or the hour, or the moment, in which they are addressing them will be their last and only chance; that all the means of God's grace are bound up in the brief period which they have adjusted within which to receive converts; that the Lord, who promised to be with his church to the end of the world, is tarrying with them for a few hours, and will then take up his departure from them forever; and that the God, whom nature and scripture represent as omnipresent at all times, is at that moment in the place, but will soon be gone, never more to return! There appear in such kinds of appeals as these, too many indications of fraud, arrogance, and irreverence, for us to think of approving or imitating them.

Finally, we think it unsafe to indulge, to so great an extent, in terrifying representations, or startling images, because we do not believe that they affect the character in the proper manner; they do not strike at the right point; they do not reach the deep recesses of the heart. They produce a result that cannot be relied upon, that may be transient, that is always superficial. The great principles upon which to fix the religious character, are the convictions of the understanding, and the sentiment of love; meaning by love, that profound central affection on which alone we can find a sure, certain, and immove-

able foundation, upon which to fasten the chain that is to bind the soul of man to his fellow man, his Savior, and his God.

Although the views here presented are, strictly speaking, those of a single individual, yet it may perhaps be said that in their general outlines they are such as are entertained by the greater proportion of the friends and advocates of unitarian christianity. While the ministers of that persuasion hope and endeavor to encourage, stimulate, advise, and help their hearers in acquiring the new life which the gospel seeks to impart to them, they never permit their people to forget that it is by a faithful individual use of the means of grace that it is to be attained, and that it is for every man to work out, personally, his own salvation.

From what has been said it is obvious that those persons who depend upon others for their religion, who propose to be converted by external circumstances, who desire to be carried away by their fears or passions, to be frightened, hurried, or driven on to the formation of the christian character, and who can reconcile it with their self-respect, to surrender themselves up to the influence of an artfully contrived system of physical excitement, or with their sense of duty, to submit, in a matter of the highest concern to them personally, and with respect to which they are bound to call no man master, to be moulded and fashioned by the impulses and manipulations of other men, will not find any sympathy among rational Christians. But we consider all as belonging to that denomination, who believe that conversion is a process to be commenced and conducted with the most calm and deliberate reflection, — who believe that Christianity is a reasonable system, and that the character it aims to form

should be built up upon the whole constitution of man's moral nature, upon his reason and intellect, as well as upon his feelings and affections, — who, while they appreciate with justice the regular means of social religion, and give to them a constant and sincere support, do not depend solely upon ministers or meetings for their salvation, — who purpose to do something for themselves, to co-operate actively, vigilantly and perseveringly in acquiring the christian character; — who, in a word, are disposed to use the means within their reach, to use them steadily, to use them soberly, and to use them all in due proportion.

IV. The last question proposed for discussion, in connection with our subject, was this: "What is the nature or general description of the effect produced upon the character by regeneration?"

Here there is a practical agreement between orthodox and rational christians. Although a most obstinate determination has been manifested to prejudice and injure us, on the ground that we reduce the standard of the requisitions of the gospel, it is still true, nevertheless, that we do represent Christianity as demanding the most thorough change in the character and views of its disciples. We believe that the contemplation of religious truths and the cultivation of the christian spirit are suited to produce great alterations in the thoughts, affections, and desires, that they give a new coloring to every thing upon which the mind can meditate, or the eye rest. A wonderful change and amendment will take place in the moral condition of him whose spirit has been renewed by the power of the gospel; his mind will take delight in ranging through the fields of thought to which it was a

stranger before; and his heart will glow with emotions, and swell with raptures, which nothing but God, and his blessed Son, a heaven of holiness and an eternity of happiness and glory can awaken. We believe that old things will indeed pass away, and that all things will become new. We believe that if any man be in Christ, he is indeed a new creature. When the light of divine truth is shining around him and imparting a brighter hue to the earth beneath and the heavens above him, he will be as it were in a new world, and may well be said to have been born again.

The point of difference between the two classes of christians above-mentioned, is not so much with respect to the character or the amount of this change, as the mode in which it is brought about. We maintain that it is by securing the attention of our natural faculties to new truths and objects, and not by creating new faculties, or by changing their nature. The cause to which we ascribe the change is amply adequate. Our experience presents a variety of precedents of the same extensive and complete revolution of the character. In the earlier years of life, a season does not pass over us without witnessing an entire change in the channels through which the affections flow, in the motives of conduct, and in the objects of desire. But no one imagines that the child, whose whole care and interest was at a certain period directed to one particular kind of amusement, and then shortly afterwards to another, and so on again to another, has passed through so many radical and essential changes in its original constitution. So too the formation of mutual friendships and of interesting connections spreads over all the thoughts and feelings a new light, carries the mind out into unexplored regions of reflection

and meditation and care, and brings up into the heart affections different in warmth and depth and energy from any which it ever felt before. Yet nobody ever talks of a new faculty or a supernatural change in such cases.

How different is the mind of the ignorant savage from that of the philosopher who sends his exploring thought up among the stars and suns that shine in the firmament, and measures their distances and weighs them as in a balance, and detects their mysteries, and unravels their sublime mazes, and describes the laws that bind them to their orbits and impel them in their paths! And is not all this difference produced merely by the circumstance that the faculties of the one have been permitted to slumber while those of the other have been awakened and exercised and developed?

And surely if any subject is capable thus of transforming, expanding and ennobling the character of him who contemplates it, religion is that subject. The first object it presents to the mind, is the most sublime of all thoughts — God, the Framer, Upholder, Benefactor, Father of all worlds and all beings. It proceeds to reveal him in his works, to point out his glorious and awful attributes, as seen in the universe. It lays open before us the volume of his word, and teaches us the relations we sustain to him. It then directs our admiring gaze to the Savior, the purest, holiest and most exalted being that ever appeared in the world. In meditating upon his life and character, our hearts feel the sympathy of a common humanity. He becomes endeared to us while we think of his holy example, his divine virtues, and his compassionate sufferings. It carries us to the foot of his cross, and there we see revealed the interesting truths connected with the redemption of man. It carries us to his

broken and empty tomb, and while bending over its forsaken chamber, the clouds that had rested upon the grave disappear, heaven is thrown open to our view, and life and immortality are fully brought to light.

The truths of religion address themselves to the deepest feelings of the heart, awaken every pure affection, and call them into vigorous and delightful action upon the most interesting and important objects,—objects so grand and infinite that they never loose their attraction, but continually reveal themselves in new, and lovelier, and sublimer aspects to the soul that takes pleasure in contemplating them. While thus engaged, the mind expands and rises to a loftier eminence. It feels that the scenes of earth and the interests of time are all insufficient to satisfy its cravings and give full developement to its powers. Religion allays the thirst which had never been slaked before, and opens fountains of pure and living waters from which gratitude, love, reverence, hope, piety, and every holy sentiment can draw forever, with a continually increasing relish. Indeed, it is in vain to describe, in words of man's invention, the noble elevation, the sublime purity, the heavenly joy imparted to the soul by the direction of its thoughts and affections to the truths and hopes of religion. "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb."

In closing this division of the subject, I would observe that the opinion that no elementary change takes place in our natures, although the character may undergo the most complete revolution, is countenanced by the analogy of the physical world. The most thorough changes occur in various combinations of matter, without the least addition to or subtraction from the particles of which they are made up, but merely by a new arrangement, or a new relative action between those particles. A familiar, and by no means inapposite, illustration of this argument is the surprising and total alteration which ensues in the appearance and character of the whole substance, when ice is exposed to the influence of the sun. Without the least change in the subject matter, it throws off one set of qualities and assumes qualities of a directly opposite kind. When the heart of man is uncovered and exposed to the influence of the sun of righteousness, is it not *natural* that it should melt beneath its warm radiance?

If such are the effects of regeneration, and such is the mode in which it is brought about, one more inquiry suggests itself in natural connection with the question last discussed — What are the evidences of regeneration? I answer — a reformation of life.

All reflecting men, and all respectable denominations must soon come to this conclusion, and consent to take this ground. Considerable dependence is still placed, it is true, in frames of feeling, in impressions, in excitements, in raptures, in strong and impassioned convictions. There are still some, who mistake the quiet and tranquil calm which, owing to the laws of our physical system, necessarily succeeds a violent agitation of the feelings, for a change, as the phrase is, from death unto life. We still

hear of an anxious period, a distressful period, and of being brought out from darkness into marvellous light. But an intelligent and observing community cannot much longer be deceived on this subject. The instances of excessive worldly-mindedness, of a total want of principle, and of gross immoralities, in persons conspicuous in the ranks of those who once experienced, or thought they experienced, this change, are too numerous to admit a doubt to exist that it is not worthy of being called the true Christian change — it is not the gospel conversion. The only test that will secure the confidence of men henceforth is a reformed life. That will be acknowledged by all as a real regeneration, however it was produced, whatever may be the denomination of the person on whom it has taken place, which is seen to purify and improve the character. And however strong may be the convictions, however deep the impressions, however powerful the excitement, however fervent the raptures, however loud the professions, however long the prayers, or however sound the faith, where there is not evidence in the life and conversation of a real turning to God, in truth and sincerity, men will not be inclined to believe that conversion, in the gospel sense, has taken place.

The signs of a renewal of the heart, let it be remembered, are to be found in a renewal of the life — in a greater degree of charity, kindness, veracity, honesty, integrity, benevolence, humility and heavenly mindedness — in an increased zeal to promote the happiness and improvement of man, and to secure the favor and blessing of God. Where we see all this in the life, where we see men rendered more temperate, industrious, modest and righteous, and more disposed to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God, there we ought joyfully to acknow-

ledge that there is a regeneration in the christian sense. Above all, let us never deceive ourselves into the idea that we have been born again, unless we can discern these evidences in our own dispositions and actions. By our fruits we must be known by others, and by them let us judge ourselves. Let us strive to possess more and more of these authentic signs and genuine seals of the spirit.

I have but one thought more to express, and I beg the reader to give it a sober and candid consideration. Reader, do you approve the views presented in these pages? If you do, what is their bearing upon your own condition, and duties, and prospects? Formerly it was believed that man could do nothing to promote his regeneration, and that but a small proportion of the whole race, the elect, could possibly be saved. Within the dark shadow of this dreadful doctrine, a few deluded themselves into confidence, many found a justification for indolence and indifference, and many more sunk into despair. But it is your belief that it depends upon each individual whether he be converted and saved, — that all men have the opportunity and the power of securing their own regeneration, — and that God is ready, and stands waiting to grant all needed assistance and blessing to those who use the means he has provided. If then your conscience tells you that you have not used those means as faithfully as you might have used them; that you are not yet converted to God; that your spirit is not yet regenerated by the influences of the gospel; and if you do not resolve to improve your opportunities, and henceforth use the means still placed within your reach, and carry that resolve into execution, — What, I ask, will be your condition? WILL YOU NOT BE WITHOUT EXCUSE? — I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.

1st Series. No. 159.

THE POWER

OF

UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY

TO PRODUCE AN

ENLIGHTENED AND FERVENT PIETY.

By W. E. CHANNING, D. D.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

October, 1840.

Price 4 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, SCHOOL STREET.

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Unitarianism has been made a term of so much reproach, and has been uttered in so many tones of alarm, horror, indignation, and scorn, that to many it gives only a vague impression of something monstrous, impious, unutterably perilous. To such, I would say, that this doctrine, which is considered by some, as the last and most perfect invention of Satan, the consummation of his blasphemies, the most cunning weapon ever forged in the fires of hell, amounts to this — That there is One God, even the Father; and that Jesus Christ is not this One God, but his son and messenger, who derived all his powers and glories from the Universal Parent, and who came into the world not to claim supreme homage for himself, but to carry up the soul to his Father as the Only Divine Person, the Only Ultimate Object of religious worship. To us, this doctrine seems not to have sprung from hell, but to have descended from the throne of God,

and to invite and attract us thither. To us it seems to come from the scriptures, with a voice loud as the sound of many waters, and as articulate and clear as if Jesus, in a bodily form, were pronouncing it distinctly in our ears.

That we desire to propagate this doctrine, we do not conceal. It is a treasure, which we wish not to confine to ourselves, which we dare not lock up in our own breasts. We regard it as given to us for others, as well as for ourselves. We should rejoice to spread it through this city, to carry it into every dwelling, and to send it far and wide to the remotest settlements of our country. Am I asked, why we wish this diffusion? We dare not say, that we are in no degree influenced by sectarian feeling; for we see it raging around us, and we should be more than men, were we wholly to escape an epidemic passion. We do hope, however, that our main purpose and aim is not sectarian, but to promote a purer and nobler piety than now prevails. We are not induced to spread our opinions by the mere conviction that they are true; for there are many truths, historical, metaphysical, scientific, literary, which we have no anxiety to propagate. We regard them as the highest, most important, most efficient truths, and therefore demanding a firm testimony, and earnest efforts to make them known. In thus speaking, we do not mean, that we regard our peculiar views as essential to salvation. Far from us be this spirit of exclusion, the very spirit of antichrist, the worst of all the delusions of popery and of protestantism. We hold nothing to be essential, but the simple and supreme dedication of the mind, heart, and life to God and to his will. This inward and practical devotedness to the Su-

preme Being, we are assured, is attained and accepted under all the forms of Christianity. We believe, however, that it is favored by that truth which we maintain, as by no other system of faith. We regard Unitarianism as peculiarly the friend of inward, living, practical religion. For this we value it. For this we would spread it; and we desire none to embrace it, but such as shall seek and derive from it this celestial influence.

This character and property of Unitarian Christianity, its fitness to promote true, deep, and living piety, being our chief ground of attachment to it, I have thought proper to make this the topic of my present discourse. I do not propose to prove the truth of Unitarianism by scriptural authorities, for this argument would exceed the limits of a sermon, but to show its superior tendency to form an elevated religious character. If, however, this position can be sustained, I shall have contributed no weak argument in support of the truth of our views; for the chief purpose of Christianity undoubtedly is, to promote piety, to bring us to God, to fill our souls with that Great Being, to make us alive to Him; and a religious system can carry no more authentic mark of a divine original, than its obvious, direct, and peculiar adaptation to quicken and raise the mind to its Creator.— In speaking thus of Unitarian Christianity as promoting piety, I ought to observe that I use this word in its proper and highest sense. I mean not everything which bears the name of piety, for under this title superstition, fanaticism, and formality are walking abroad and claiming respect. I mean not an anxious frame of mind, not abject and slavish fear, not a dread of hell, not a repetition of

forms, not church-going, not loud profession, not severe censure of others' irreligion; but filial love and reverence towards God, habitual gratitude, cheerful trust, ready obedience, and, though last not least, an imitation of the ever active and unbounded benevolence of the Creator.

The object of this discourse requires me to speak with great freedom of different systems of religion. But let me not be misunderstood. Let not the uncharitableness, which I condemn, be lightly laid to my charge. Let it be remembered, that I speak only of systems, not of those who embrace them. In setting forth with all simplicity what seem to me the good or bad tendencies of doctrines, I have not a thought of giving standards or measures by which to estimate the virtue or vice of their professors. Nothing would be more unjust, than to decide on men's characters from their peculiarities of faith; and the reason is plain. Such peculiarities are not the only causes which impress and determine the mind. Our nature is exposed to innumerable other influences. If indeed a man were to know nothing but his creed, were to meet with no human beings but those who adopt it, were to see no example and to hear no conversation, but such as were formed by it; if his creed were to meet him everywhere, and to exclude every other object of thought; then his character might be expected to answer to it with great precision. But our Creator has not shut us up in so narrow a school. The mind is exposed to an infinite variety of influences, and these are multiplying with the progress of society. Education, friendship, neighborhood, public opinion, the state of society, 'the genius of the place' where we live, books, events, the pleasures

and business of life, the outward creation, our physical temperament, and innumerable other causes, are perpetually pouring in upon the soul thoughts, views, and emotions; and these influences are so complicated, so peculiarly combined in the case of every individual, and so modified by the original susceptibilities and constitution of every mind, that on no subject is there greater uncertainty than on the formation of character. To determine the precise operation of a religious opinion amidst this host of influences surpasses human power. A great truth may be completely neutralized by the countless impressions and excitements, which the mind receives from other sources; and so a great error may be disarmed of much of its power, by the superior energy of other and better views, of early habits, and of virtuous examples. Nothing is more common than to see a doctrine believed without swaying the will. Its efficacy depends, not on the assent of the intellect, but on the place which it occupies in the thoughts, on the distinctness and vividness with which it is conceived, on its association with our common ideas, on its frequency of recurrence, and on its command of the attention, without which it has no life. Accordingly, pernicious opinions are not seldom held by men of the most illustrious virtue. I mean not then, in commending or condemning systems, to pass sentence on their professors. I know the power of the mind to select from a multifarious system, for its habitual use, those features or principles which are generous, pure, and ennobling, and by these, to sustain its spiritual life amidst the nominal profession of many errors. I know that a creed is one thing, as written in a book, and another, as it exists in the minds of its advocates. In the book, all the doc-

trines appear in equally strong and legible lines. In the mind, many are faintly traced and seldom recurred to, whilst others are inscribed as with sunbeams, and are the chosen, constant lights of the soul. Hence, in good men of opposing denominations, a real agreement may subsist as to their vital principles of faith; and amidst the division of tongues, there may be unity of soul, and the same internal worship of God. By these remarks I do not mean that error is not evil, or that it bears no pernicious fruit. Its tendencies are always bad. But I mean, that these tendencies exert themselves amidst so many counteracting influences; and that injurious opinions so often lie dead, through the want of mixture with the common thoughts, through the mind's not absorbing them, and changing them into its own substance; that the highest respect may, and ought to be cherished for men, in whose creed we find much to disapprove. In this discourse I shall speak freely, and some may say severely, of Trinitarianism; but I love and honor not a few of its advocates; and in opposing what I deem their error, I would on no account detract from their worth. After these remarks I hope that the language of earnest discussion and strong conviction will not be construed into the want of that charity, which I acknowledge as the first grace of our religion.

I now proceed to illustrate and prove the superiority of Unitarian Christianity, as a means of promoting a deep and noble piety.

I. Unitarianism is a system most favorable to piety, because it presents to the mind One, and only one, Infinite Person, to whom supreme homage is to be paid. It does not weaken the energy of religious sentiment by dividing

it among various objects. It collects and concentrates the soul on One Father of unbounded, undivided unrivalled glory. To Him, it teaches the mind to rise through all beings. Around Him it gathers all the splendors of the universe. To Him it teaches us to ascribe whatever good we receive or behold, the beauty and magnificence of nature, the liberal gifts of providence, the capacities of the soul, the bonds of society, and especially the riches of grace and redemption, the mission, and powers, and beneficent influences of Jesus Christ. All happiness it traces up to the Father, as the sole source; and the mind, which these views have penetrated, through this intimate association of everything exciting and exalting in the universe with One Infinite Parent, can and does offer itself up to him with the intensest and profoundest love, of which human nature is susceptible. The Trinitarian indeed professes to believe in one God and means to hold fast to this truth. But three persons, having distinctive qualities and relations, of whom one is sent and another the sender, one is given and another the giver, of whom one intercedes and another hears the intercession, of whom one takes flesh, and another never becomes incarnate, three persons, thus discriminated, are as truly three objects of the mind, as if they were acknowledged to be separate divinities; and from the principles of our nature, they cannot act on the mind as deeply and powerfully as One Infinite Person, to whose sole goodness all happiness is ascribed. To multiply infinite objects for the heart, is to distract it. To scatter the attention among three equal persons, is to impair the power of each. The more strict and absolute the unity of God, the more easily and intimately all the

impressions and emotions of piety flow together, and are condensed into one glowing thought, one thrilling love. No language can express the absorbing energy of the thought of one Infinite Father. When vitally implanted in the soul, it grows and gains strength forever. It enriches itself by every new view of God's word and works; gathers tribute from all regions and all ages; and attracts into itself all the rays of beauty, glory and joy, in the material and spiritual creation.

My hearers, as you would feel the full influence of God upon your souls, guard sacredly, keep unobscured and unsullied, that fundamental and glorious truth, that there is One, and only One Almighty Agent in the universe, One Infinite Father. Let this truth dwell in me in its uncorrupted simplicity, and I have the spring and nutriment of an ever growing piety. I have an object for my mind towards which all things bear me. I know whither to go in all trial, whom to bless in all joy, whom to adore in all I behold. But let three persons claim from me supreme homage, and claim it on different grounds, one for sending and another for coming to my relief, and I am divided, distracted, perplexed. My frail intellect is overborne. Instead of One Father, on whose arm I can rest, my mind is torn from object to object, and I tremble, lest, among so many claimants of supreme love, I should withhold from one or another his due.

II. Unitarianism is the system most favorable to piety, because it holds forth and preserves inviolate the spirituality of God. 'God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' It is of great importance to the progress and elevation of the religious principle, that we should refine more and more our con-

ceptions of God; that we should separate from him all material properties, and whatever is limited or imperfect in our own nature; that we should regard him as a pure intelligence, an unmixed and infinite Mind. When it pleased God to select the Jewish people and place them under miraculous interpositions, one of the first precepts given them was, that they should not represent God under any bodily form, any graven image, or the likeness of any creature. Next came Christianity, which had this as one of its great objects, to render religion still more spiritual, by abolishing the ceremonial and outward worship of former times, and by discarding those grosser modes of describing God, through which the ancient prophets had sought to impress an unrefined people.

Now Unitarianism concurs with this sublime moral purpose of God. It asserts his spirituality. It approaches him under no bodily form, but as a pure spirit, as the infinite and universal Mind. On the other hand, it is the direct influence of Trinitarianism to materialize men's conceptions of God; and, in truth, this system is a relapse into the error of the rudest and earliest ages, into the worship of a corporeal God. Its leading feature is, the doctrine of a God clothed with a body, and acting and speaking through a material frame, — of the Infinite Divinity dying on a cross; a doctrine, which in earthliness reminds us of the mythology of the rudest pagans, and which a pious Jew, in the twilight of the Mosaic religion, would have shrunk from with horror. It seems to me no small objection to the Trinity, that it supposes God to take a body in the later and more improved ages of the world, when it is plain, that such a manifestation, if needed at all, was peculiarly required in the infancy of the race.

The effect of such a system in debasing the idea of God, in associating with the Divinity human passions and infirmities, is too obvious to need much elucidation. On the supposition that the second person of the Trinity became incarnate, God may be said to be a material being, on the same general ground, on which this is affirmed of man; for man is material only by the union of the mind with the body; and the very meaning of incarnation is, that God took a body, through which he acted and spoke, as the human soul operates through its corporeal organs. Every bodily affection may thus be ascribed to God. Accordingly, the Trinitarian, in his most solemn act of adoration, is heard to pray in these appalling words: 'Good Lord, deliver us; by the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation, by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us.' Now I ask you to judge, from the principles of human nature, whether to worshippers, who adore their God for his wounds and tears, his agony, and blood, and sweat, the ideas of corporeal existence and human suffering will not predominate over the conceptions of a purely spiritual essence; whether the mind, in clinging to the man, will not lose the God; whether a surer method for depressing and adulterating the pure thought of the Divinity could have been devised. That the Trinitarian is unconscious of this influence of his faith, I know, nor do I charge it on him as a crime. Still it exists and cannot be too much deplored.

The Roman Catholics, true to human nature and their creed, have sought, by painting and statuary, to bring their imagined God before their eyes; and have thus ob-

tained almost as vivid impressions of him, as if they had lived with him on the earth. The Protestant condemns them for using these similitudes and representations in their worship; but if a Trinitarian, he does so to his own condemnation. For if, as he believes, it was once a duty to bow in adoration before the living body of his incarnate God, what possible guilt can there be in worshipping before the pictured or sculptured memorial of the same being? Christ's body may as truly be represented by the artist, as any other human form; and its image may be used as effectually and properly, as that of an ancient sage or hero, to recall him with vividness to the mind.—Is it said, that God has expressly forbidden the use of images in our worship? But why was that prohibition laid on the Jews? For this express reason, that God had not presented himself to them in any form, which admitted of representation. Hear the language of Moses: 'Take good heed lest ye make you a graven image, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.'* If, since that period, God has taken a body, then the reason of the prohibition has ceased; and if he took a body, among other purposes, that he might assist the weakness of the intellect, which needs a material form, then a statue, which lends so great an aid to the conception of an absent friend, is not only justified, but seems to be required.

This materializing and embodying of the Supreme Being, which is the essence of Trinitarianism, cannot but be adverse to a growing and exalted piety. Human and divine properties, being confounded in one being, lose

* Deut. iv. 15, 16.—The arrangement of the text is a little changed to put the reader immediately in possession of the meaning.

their distinctness. The splendors of the Godhead are dimmed. The worshippers of an incarnate Deity, through the frailty of their nature, are strongly tempted to fasten chiefly on his human attributes; and their devotion, instead of rising to the Infinite God, and taking the peculiar character which Infinity inspires, becomes rather a human affection, borrowing much of its fervor from the ideas of suffering, blood, and death. It is indeed possible, that this Godman (to use the strange phraseology of Trinitarians) may excite the mind more easily, than a purely spiritual divinity; just as a tragedy, addressed to the eye and ear, will interest the multitude more than the contemplation of the most exalted character. But the emotions, which are the most easily roused, are not the profoundest or most enduring. This human love, inspired by a human God, though at first more fervid, cannot grow and spread through the soul, like the reverential attachment, which an infinite, spiritual Father awakens. Refined conceptions of God, though more slowly attained, have a more quickening and all-pervading energy, and admit of perpetual accessions of brightness, life, and strength.

True, we shall be told, that Trinitarianism has converted only one of its three persons into a human Deity, and that the other two remain purely spiritual beings. But who does not know, that man will attach himself most strongly to the God who has become a man? Is not this even a duty, if the Divinity has taken a body to place himself within the reach of human comprehension and sympathy? That the Trinitarian's views of the Divinity will be colored more by his visible, tangible, corporeal God, than by those persons of the Trinity, who remain comparatively hidden in their invisible and spiritual essence, is so accor-

dant with the principles of our nature, as to need no labored proof.

My friends, hold fast the doctrine of a purely spiritual divinity. It is one of the great supports and instruments of a vital piety. It brings God near, as no other doctrine can. One of the leading purposes of Christianity, is to give us an ever growing sense of God's immediate presence, a consciousness of him in our souls. Now, just as far as corporeal or limited attributes enter into our conception of him, we remove him from us. He becomes an outward, distant being, instead of being viewed and felt as dwelling in the soul itself. It is an unspeakable benefit of the doctrine of a purely spiritual God, that he can be regarded as inhabiting, filling our spiritual nature; and through this union with our minds, he can and does become the object of an intimacy and friendship, such as no embodied being can call forth.

III. Unitarianism is the system most favorable to piety, because it presents a distinct and intelligible object of worship, a being, whose nature, whilst inexpressibly sublime, is yet simple and suited to human apprehension. An infinite Father is the most exalted of all conceptions, and yet the least perplexing It involves no incongruous ideas. It is illustrated by analogies from our own nature. It coincides with that fundamental law of the intellect, through which we demand a cause proportioned to effects. It is also as interesting as it is rational; so that it is peculiarly congenial with the improved mind. The sublime simplicity of God, as he is taught in Unitarianism, by relieving the understanding from perplexity, and by placing him within the reach of thought and affection, gives him peculiar power over the soul. Trinitarianism, on the

other hand, is a riddle. Men call it a mystery; but it is mysterious, not like the great truths of religion, by its vastness and grandeur, but by the irreconcilable ideas which it involves. One God, consisting of three persons or agents, is so strange a being, so unlike our own minds, and all others with which we hold intercourse, is so misty, so incongruous, so contradictory, that he cannot be apprehended with that distinctness and that feeling of reality, which belong to the opposite system. Such a heterogeneous being, who is at the same moment one and many; who includes in his own nature the relations of Father and Son, or, in other words, is Father and Son to himself; who, in one of his persons, is at the same moment the supreme God and a mortal man, omniscient and ignorant, almighty and impotent; such a being is certainly the most puzzling and distracting object ever presented to human thought. Trinitarianism, instead of teaching an intelligible God, offers to the mind a strange compound of hostile attributes, bearing plain marks of those ages of darkness, when Christianity shed but a faint ray, and the diseased fancy teemed with prodigies and unnatural creations. In contemplating a being, who presents such different and inconsistent aspects, the mind finds nothing to rest upon; and instead of receiving distinct and harmonious impressions, is disturbed by shifting, unsettled images. To commune with such a being must be as hard, as to converse with a man of three different countenances, speaking with three different tongues. The believer in this system must forget it, when he prays, or he could find no repose in devotion. Who can compare it in distinctness, reality, and power, with the simple doctrine of One Infinite Father?

IV. Unitarianism promotes a fervent and enlightened

piety, by asserting the absolute and unbounded perfection of God's character. This is the highest service which can be rendered to mankind. Just and generous conceptions of the Divinity are the soul's true wealth. To spread these, is to contribute more effectually, than by any other agency, to the progress and happiness of the intelligent creation. To obscure God's glory is to do greater wrong, than to blot out the sun. The character and influence of a religion must answer to the views which it gives of the Divinity; and there is a plain tendency in that system, which manifests the divine perfections most resplendently, to awaken the sublimest and most blessed piety.

Now Trinitarianism has a fatal tendency to degrade the character of the Supreme Being, though its advocates, I am sure, intend no such wrong. By multiplying divine persons, it takes from each the glory of independent, all-sufficient, absolute perfection. This may be shown in various particulars. And in the first place, the very idea, that three persons in the divinity are in any degree important, implies and involves the imperfection of each; for it is plain, that if one divine person possesses all possible power, wisdom, love, and happiness, nothing will be gained to himself or to the creation by joining with him two, or two hundred other persons. To say that he needs others for any purpose or in any degree, is to strip him of independent and all-sufficient majesty. If our Father in Heaven, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not of himself sufficient to all the wants of his creation; if, by his union with other persons, he can accomplish any good to which he is not of himself equal; or if he thus acquires a claim to the least degree of trust or hope, to which he is not of himself entitled by his own independent attri-

butes; then it is plain, he is not a being of infinite and absolute perfection. Now Trinitarianism teaches, that the highest good accrues to the human race from the existence of three divine persons, sustaining different offices and relations to the world; and it regards the Unitarian, as subverting the foundation of human hope, by asserting that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is alone and singly God. Thus it derogates from his infinite glory.

In the next place, Trinitarianism degrades the character of the Supreme Being, by laying its disciples under the necessity of making such a distribution of offices and relations among the three persons, as will serve to designate and distinguish them; for in this way it interferes with the sublime conceptions of One Infinite Person, in whom all glories are concentred. If we are required to worship three persons, we must view them in different lights, or they will be mere repetitions of each other, mere names and sounds, presenting no objects, conveying no meaning to the mind. Some appropriate character, some peculiar acts, feelings, and relations must be ascribed to each. In other words, the glory of all must be shorn, that some special distinguishing lustre may be thrown on each. Accordingly, creation is associated peculiarly with the conception of the Father; satisfaction for human guilt with that of the Son; whilst sanctification, the noblest work of all, is given to the Holy Spirit as his more particular work. By a still more fatal distribution, the work of justice, the office of vindicating the rights of the Divinity, falls peculiarly to the Father, whilst the loveliness of interposing mercy clothes peculiarly the person of the Son By this unhappy influence of Trinitarianism, from which common minds at least cannot escape, the splendors of the

Godhead, being scattered among three objects, instead of being united in One Infinite Father, are dimmed; and he, whose mind is thoroughly and practically possessed by this system, can hardly conceive the effulgence of glory in which the one God offers himself to a pious believer in his strict unity.

But the worst has not been told. I observe, then, in the third place, that if Three Divine Persons are believed in, such an administration or government of the world must be ascribed to them, as will furnish them with a sphere of operation. No man will admit three persons into his creed, without finding a use for them. Now it is an obvious remark, that a system of the universe, which involves and demands more than one Infinite Agent, must be wild, extravagant, and unworthy the perfect God; because there is no possible or conceivable good, to which such an agent is not adequate. Accordingly we find Trinitarianism connecting itself with a scheme of administration, exceedingly derogatory to the divine character. It teaches, that the Infinite Father saw fit to put into the hands of our first parents the character and condition of their whole progeny; and that, through one act of disobedience, the whole race bring with them into being a corrupt nature, or are born depraved. It teaches, that the offences of a short life, though begun and spent under this disastrous influence, merit endless punishment, and that God's law threatens this infinite penalty; and that man is thus burdened with a guilt, which no sufferings of the created universe can expiate, which nothing but the sufferings of an Infinite Being can purge away. In this condition of human nature, Trinitarianism finds a sphere of action for its different persons. I am aware that some

Trinitarians, on hearing this statement of their system, may reproach me with ascribing to them the errors of Calvinism, a system which they abhor as much as ourselves. But none of the peculiarities of Calvinism enter into this exposition. I have given what I understand to be the leading features of Trinitarianism all the world over; and the benevolent professors of that faith, who recoil from this statement, must blame not the preacher, but the creeds and establishments by which these doctrines are diffused. For ourselves, we look with horror and grief on the views of God's government, which are naturally and intimately united with Trinitarianism. They take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute a stern and unjust lord. Our filial love and reverence rise up against them. We say to the Trinitarian, touch any thing but the perfections of God. Cast no stain on that spotless purity and loveliness. We can endure any errors but those, which subvert or unsettle the conviction of God's paternal goodness. Urge not upon us a system, which makes existence a curse, and wraps the universe in gloom. Leave us the cheerful light, the free and healthful atmosphere, of a liberal and rational faith; the ennobling and consoling influences of the doctrine, which nature and revelation in blessed concord teach us, of One Father of Unbounded and Inexhaustible Love.

V. Unitarianism is peculiarly favorable to piety, because it accords with nature, with the world around and the world within us; and through this accordance it gives aid to nature, and receives aid from it, in impressing the mind with God. We live in the midst of a glorious universe, which was meant to be a witness and a preacher of the Divinity; and a revelation from God may be expected to

be in harmony with this system, and to carry on a common ministry with it in lifting the soul to God. Now Unitarianism is in accordance with nature. It teaches One Father, and so does creation, the more it is explored. Philosophy, in proportion as it extends its views of the universe, sees in it, more and more, a sublime and beautiful unity, and multiplies proofs, that all things have sprung from one intelligence, one power, one love. The whole outward creation proclaims to the Unitarian the truth in which he delights. So does his own soul. But neither nature nor the soul bears one trace of Three Divine Persons. Nature is no Trinitarian. It gives not a hint, not a glimpse, of a tri-personal author. Trinitarianism is a confined system, shut up in a few texts, a few written lines, where many of the wisest minds have failed to discover it. It is not inscribed on the heavens and the earth, not borne on every wind, not resounding and re-echoing through the universe. The sun and stars say nothing of a God of three persons. They all speak of the One Father whom *we* adore. To *our* ears, one and the same voice comes from God's word and works, a full and swelling strain, growing clearer, louder, more thrilling as we listen, and with one blessed influence lifting up our souls to the Almighty Father.

This accordance between nature and revelation increases the power of both over the mind. Concurring as they do in one impression they make that impression deeper. To men of reflection, the conviction of the reality of religion is exceedingly heightened, by a perception of harmony in the views of it which they derive from various sources. Revelation is never received with so intimate a persuasion of its truth, as when it is seen to conspire to

the same ends and impressions, for which all other things are made. It is no small objection to Trinitarianism, that it is an insulated doctrine, that it reveals a God whom we meet nowhere in the universe. Three Divine Persons, I repeat it, are found only in a few texts, and those so dark, that the gifted minds of Milton, Newton, and Locke could not find them there. Nature gives them not a whisper of evidence. And can they be as real and powerful to the mind, as that One Father, whom the general strain and common voice of Scripture, and the universal voice of nature call us to adore?

VI. Unitarianism favors piety by opening the mind to new and ever enlarging views of God. Teaching, as it does, the same God with nature, it leads us to seek him in nature. It does not shut us up in the written word, precious as that manifestation of the Divinity is. It considers revelation, not as independent on his other means of instruction; not as a separate agent; but as a part of the great system of God for enlightening and elevating the human soul; as intimately joined with creation and providence, and intended to concur with them; and as given to assist us in reading the volume of the universe. Thus Unitarianism, where its genuine influence is experienced, tends to enrich and fertilize the mind; opens it to new lights, wherever they spring up; and by combining, makes more efficient, the means of religious knowledge. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a system which tends to confine the mind; to shut it up in what is written; to diminish its interest in the universe; and to disincline it to bright and enlarged views of God's works. — This effect will be explained, in the first place, if we consider, that the peculiarities of Trinitarianism differ so much from

the teachings of the universe, that he, who attaches himself to the one, will be in danger of losing his interest in the other. The ideas of Three Divine Persons, of God clothing himself in flesh, of the infinite Creator saving the guilty by transferring their punishment to an innocent being, these ideas cannot easily be made to coalesce in the mind with that, which nature gives, of One Almighty Father and Unbounded Spirit, whom no worlds can contain, and whose vicegerent in the human breast pronounces it a crime, to lay the penalties of vice on the pure and unoffending.

But Trinitarianism has a still more positive influence in shutting the mind against improving views from the universe. It tends to throw gloom over God's works. Imagining that Christ is to be exalted, by giving him an exclusive agency in enlightening and recovering mankind, it is tempted to disparage other lights and influences; and for the purpose of magnifying his salvation, it inclines to exaggerate the darkness and desperateness of man's present condition. The mind, thus impressed, naturally leans to those views of nature and of society, which will strengthen the ideas of desolation and guilt. It is tempted to aggravate the miseries of life, and to see in them only the marks of divine displeasure and punishing justice; and overlooks their obvious fitness and design to awaken our powers, exercise our virtues, and strengthen our social ties. In like manner it exaggerates the sins of men, that the need of an Infinite atonement may be maintained. Some of the most affecting tokens of God's love within and around us are obscured by this gloomy theology. The glorious faculties of the soul, its high aspirations, its sensibility to the great and good in character, its sympathy

with disinterested and suffering virtue, its benevolent and religious instincts, its thirst for happiness not found on earth, these are overlooked or thrown into the shade, that they may not disturb the persuasion of man's natural corruption. Ingenuity is employed to disparage what is interesting in the human character. Whilst the bursts of passion in the newborn child are gravely urged, as indications of a native rooted corruption; its bursts of affection, its sweet smile, its innocent and irrepressible joy, its loveliness and beauty, are not listened to, though they plead more eloquently its alliance with higher natures. The sacred and tender affections of home; the unwearied watchings and cheerful sacrifices of parents; the reverential, grateful assiduity of children, smoothing an aged father's or mother's descent to the grave; woman's love, stronger than death; the friendship of brothers and sisters; the anxious affection, which tends around the bed of sickness; the subdued voice, which breathes comfort into the mourner's heart; all the endearing offices, which shed a serene light through our dwellings; these are explained away by the thorough advocates of this system, so as to include no real virtue, so as to consist with a natural aversion to goodness. Even the higher efforts of disinterested benevolence, and the most unaffected expressions of piety, if not connected with what is called 'the true faith,' are, by the most rigid disciples of the doctrine which I oppose, resolved into the passion for distinction, or some other working of 'unsanctified nature.' Thus Trinitarianism and its kindred doctrines have a tendency to veil God's goodness, to sully his fairest works, to dim the lustre of those innocent and pure affections, which a divine breath kindles in the soul, to blight the beauty and

freshness of creation, and in this way to consume the very nutriment of piety. We know, and rejoice to know, that in multitudes this tendency is counteracted by a cheerful temperament, a benevolent nature, and a strength of gratitude, which bursts the shackles of a melancholy system. But from the nature of the doctrine, the tendency exists and is strong; and an impartial observer will often discern it resulting in gloomy, depressing views of life and the universe.

Trinitarianism, by thus tending to exclude bright and enlarging views of the creation, seems to me not only to chill the heart, but to injure the understanding as far as moral and religious truth is concerned. It does not send the mind far and wide for new and elevating objects; and we have here one explanation of the barrenness and feebleness, by which theological writings are so generally marked. It is not wonderful, that the prevalent theology should want vitality and enlargement of thought, for it does not accord with the perfections of God and the spirit of the universe. It has not its root in eternal truth; but is a narrow, technical, artificial system, the fabrication of unrefined ages, and consequently incapable of being blended with the new lights which are spreading over the most interesting subjects, and of being incorporated with the results and anticipations of original and progressive minds. It stands apart in the mind, instead of seizing upon new truths, and converting them into its own nutriment. With few exceptions, the Trinitarian theology of the present day is greatly deficient in freshness of thought, and in power to awaken the interest and to meet the intellectual and spiritual wants of thinking men. I see indeed superior minds and great minds

among the adherents of the prevalent system; but they seem to me to move in chains, and to fulfil poorly their high function of adding to the wealth of the human intellect. In theological discussion, they remind me more of Sampson grinding in the narrow mill of the Philistines, than of that undaunted champion achieving victories for God's people, and enlarging the bounds of their inheritance. Now a system, which has a tendency to confine the mind, and to impair its sensibility to the manifestations of God, in the universe, is so far unfriendly to piety, to a bright, joyous, hopeful, ever growing love of the Creator. It tends to generate and nourish a religion of a melancholy tone, such, I apprehend, as now predominates in the christian world.

VII. Unitarianism promotes piety by the high place, which it assigns to piety in the character and work of Jesus Christ. What is it which the Unitarian regards as the chief glory of the character of Christ? I answer, his filial devotion, the entireness with which he surrendered himself to the will and benevolent purposes of God. The piety of Jesus, which, on the supposition of his Supreme Divinity, is a subordinate and incongruous, is, to us, his prominent and crowning, attribute. We place his 'oneness with God,' not in an unintelligible unity of essence, but in unity of mind and heart, in the strength of his love, through which he renounced every separate interest, and identified himself with his Father's designs. In other words, filial piety, the consecration of his whole being to the benevolent will of his Father, this is the mild glory in which he always offers himself to our minds; and, of consequence, all our sympathies with him, all our love and veneration towards him, are so many forms of

delight in a pious character, and our whole knowledge of him incites us to a like surrender of our whole nature and existence to God.

In the next place, Unitarianism teaches, that the highest work or office of Christ is to call forth and strengthen piety in the human breast, and thus it sets before us this character as the chief acquisition and end of our being. To us, the great glory of Christ's mission consists in the power, with which he 'reveals the Father,' and establishes the 'kingdom or reign of God within' the soul. By the crown, which he wears, we understand the eminence which he enjoys in the most beneficent work in the universe, that of bringing back the lost mind to the knowledge, love, and likeness of its Creator. With these views of Christ's office, nothing can seem to us so important as an enlightened and profound piety, and we are quickened to seek it, as the perfection and happiness, to which nature and redemption jointly summon us.

Now we maintain, that Trinitarianism obscures and weakens these views of Christ's character and work; and this it does, by insisting perpetually on others of an incongruous, discordant nature. It diminishes the power of his piety. Making him, as it does, the Supreme Being, and placing him as an equal on his Father's throne, it turns the mind from him as the meekest worshipper of God; throws into the shade, as of very inferior worth, his self-denying obedience; and gives us other grounds for revering him, than his entire homage, his fervent love, his cheerful self-sacrifice to the Universal Parent. There is a plain incongruity in the belief of his Supreme Godhead with the ideas of filial piety and exemplary devotion. The mind, which has been taught to regard him as of equal

majesty and authority with the Father, cannot easily feel the power of his character as the affectionate son, whose meat it was to do his Father's will. The mind, accustomed to make him the Ultimate Object of worship, cannot easily recognise in him the pattern of that worship, the guide to the Most High. The characters are incongruous, and their union perplexing, so that neither exerts its full energy on the mind.

Trinitarianism also exhibits the work, as well as character of Christ, in lights less favorable to piety. It does not make the promotion of piety his chief end. It teaches, that the highest purpose of his mission was to reconcile God to man, not man to God. It teaches, that the most formidable obstacle to human happiness lies in the claims and threatenings of divine justice. Hence it leads men to prize Christ more, for answering these claims and averting these threatenings, than for awakening in the human soul sentiments of love towards its Father in heaven. Accordingly, multitudes seem to prize pardon more than piety, and think it a greater boon to escape, through Christ's sufferings, the fire of hell, than to receive, through his influence, the spirit of heaven, the spirit of devotion. Is such a system propitious to a generous and evergrowing piety?

If I may be allowed a short digression, I would conclude this head with the general observation, that we deem our views of Jesus Christ more interesting than those of Trinitarianism. We feel that we should lose much, by exchanging the distinct character and mild radiance, with which he offers himself to our minds, for the confused and irreconcilable glories with which that system labors to invest him. According to Unitarianism, he is a being who

may be understood, for he is one mind, one conscious nature. According to the opposite faith, he is an inconceivable compound of two most dissimilar minds, joining in one person a finite and infinite nature, a soul weak and ignorant, and a soul almighty and omniscient. And is such a being a proper object for human thought and affection? I add, as another important consideration, that to us Jesus, instead of being the second of three obscure unintelligible persons, is first and preeminent in the sphere in which he acts, and is thus the object of a distinct attachment, which he shares with no equals or rivals. To us, he is first of the sons of God, the son by peculiar nearness and likeness to the Father. He is first of all the ministers of God's mercy and beneficence, and through him the largest stream of bounty flows to the creation. He is first in God's favor and love, the most accepted of worshippers, the most prevalent of intercessors. In this mighty universe, framed to be a mirror of its author, we turn to Jesus as the brightest image of God, and gratefully yield him a place in our souls, second only to the Infinite Father, to whom he himself directs our supreme affection.

VIII. I now proceed to a great topic. Unitarianism promotes piety, by meeting the wants of man as a sinner. The wants of the sinner may be expressed almost in one word. He wants assurances of mercy in his Creator. He wants pledges, that God is love in its purest form, that is, that He has a goodness so disinterested, free, full, strong, and immutable, that the ingratitude and disobedience of his creatures cannot overcome it. This unconquerable love, which in Scripture is denominated grace, and which waits not for merit to call it forth, but flows out to the most guilty, is the sinner's only hope, and it is

fitted to call forth the most devoted gratitude. Now this grace or mercy of God, which seeks the lost, and receives and blesses the returning child, is proclaimed by that faith, which we advocate, with a clearness and energy, which cannot be surpassed. Unitarianism will not listen for a moment to the common errors, by which this bright attribute is obscured. It will not hear of a vindictive wrath in God, which must be quenched by blood; or of a justice, which binds his mercy with an iron chain, until its demands are satisfied to the full. It will not hear that God needs any foreign influence to awaken his mercy; but teaches, that the yearnings of the tenderest human parent towards a lost child are but a faint image of God's deep and overflowing compassion towards erring man. This essential and unchangeable propensity of the divine mind to forgiveness, the Unitarian behold shining forth through the whole word of God, and especially in the mission and revelation of Jesus Christ, who lived and died to make manifest the inexhaustible plenitude of divine grace; and, aided by revelation, he sees this attribute of God everywhere, both around him and within him. He sees it in the sun which shines, and the rain which descends, on the evil and unthankful; in the peace, which returns to the mind in proportion to its return to God and duty; in the sentiment of compassion, which springs up spontaneously in the human breast towards the fallen and lost; and in the moral instinct, which teaches us to cherish this compassion as a sacred principle, as an emanation of God's infinite love. In truth, Unitarianism asserts so strongly the mercy of God, that the reproach thrown upon it is, that it takes from the sinner the dread of punishment; a reproach wholly without foundation; for our

system teaches that God's mercy is not an instinctive tenderness, which cannot inflict pain; but an all-wise love, which desires the true and lasting good of its object, and consequently desires first for the sinner that restoration to purity, without which, shame, and suffering, and exile from God and heaven are of necessity and unalterably his doom. Thus Unitarianism holds forth God's grace and forgiving goodness most resplendently; and by this manifestation of him, it tends to awaken a tender and confiding piety; an ingenuous love, which mourns that it has offended; an ingenuous aversion to sin, not because sin brings punishment, but because it separates the mind from this merciful Father.

Now we object to Trinitarianism, that it obscures the mercy of God. It does so in various ways. We have already seen, that it gives such views of God's government, that we can hardly conceive of this attribute as entering into his character. Mercy to the sinner is the principle of love or benevolence in its highest form; and surely this cannot be expected from a being who brings us into existence burdened with hereditary guilt, and who threatens with endless punishment and wo the heirs of so frail and feeble a nature. With such a Creator, the idea of mercy cannot coalesce; and I will say more, that under such a government, man would need no mercy; for he would owe no allegiance to such a maker, and could not of course contract the guilt of violating it; and without guilt, no grace or pardon would be wanted. The severity of this system would place him on the ground of an injured being. The wrong would lie on the side of the Creator.

In the next place, Trinitarianism obscures God's mercy, by the manner in which it supposes pardon to be commu-

nicated. It teaches, that God remits the punishment of the offender, in consequence of receiving an equivalent from an innocent person; that the sufferings of the sinner are removed by a full satisfaction made to divine justice in the sufferings of a substitute. And is this 'the quality of mercy?' What means forgiveness, but the reception of the returning child through the strength of parental love? This doctrine invests the Savior with a claim of merit, with a right to the remission of the sins of his followers; and represents God's reception of the penitent as a recompense due to the worth of his son. And is mercy, which means free and undeserved love, made more manifest, more resplendent, by the introduction of merit and right as the ground of our salvation? Could a surer expedient be invented for obscuring its freeness, and for turning the sinner's gratitude from the sovereign who demands, to the sufferer who offers, full satisfaction for his guilt?

I know it is said, that Trinitarianism magnifies God's mercy, because it teaches, that he himself provided the substitute for the guilty. But I reply, that the work here ascribed to mercy is not the most appropriate, nor most fitted to manifest it and impress it on the heart. This may be made apparent by familiar illustrations. Suppose that a creditor, through compassion to certain debtors, should persuade a benevolent and opulent man to pay him in their stead. Would not the debtors see a greater mercy, and feel a weightier obligation, if they were to receive a free, gratuitous release? And will not their chief gratitude stray beyond the creditor to the benevolent substitute? Or suppose, that a parent, unwilling to inflict a penalty on a disobedient but feeble child, should

persuade a stronger child to bear it. Would not the offender see a more touching mercy in a free forgiveness, springing immediately from a parent's heart, than in this circuitous remission? And will he not be tempted to turn with his strongest love to the generous sufferer? In this process of substitution, of which Trinitarianism boasts so loudly, the mercy of God becomes complicated with the rights and merits of the substitute, and is a more distant cause of our salvation. These rights and merits are nearer, more visible, and more than divide the glory with grace and mercy in our rescue. They turn the mind from Divine Goodness as the only spring of its happiness, and only rock of its hope. Now this is to deprive piety of one of its chief means of growth and joy. Nothing should stand between the soul and God's mercy. Nothing should share with mercy the work of our salvation. Christ's intercession should ever be regarded as an application to love and mercy, not as a demand of justice, not as a claim of merit. I grieve to say, that Christ, as now viewed by multitudes, hides the lustre of that very attribute, which it is his great purpose to display. I fear, that to many, Jesus wears the glory of a more winning, tender mercy, than his Father, and that he is regarded as the sinner's chief resource. Is this the way to invigorate piety?

Trinitarians imagine, that there is one view of their system, peculiarly fitted to give peace and hope to the sinner, and consequently to promote gratitude and love. It is this. They say, it provides an Infinite substitute for the sinner, than which nothing can give greater relief to the burdened conscience. Jesus, being the second person of the Trinity, was able to make infinite satisfaction for sin; and what, they ask, in Unitarianism, can com-

pare with this? I have time only for two brief replies. And first, this doctrine of an Infinite satisfaction, or, as it is improperly called, of an Infinite atonement, subverts, instead of building up, hope; because it argues infinite severity in the government which requires it. Did I believe, what Trinitarianism teaches, that not the least transgression, not even the first sin of the dawning mind of the child, could be remitted without an infinite expiation, I should feel myself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written, like Draco's, in blood; and instead of thanking the sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, I should shudder at the attributes, which render this expedient necessary. It is commonly said, that an infinite atonement is needed to make due and deep impressions of the evil of sin. But he, who framed all souls and gave them their susceptibilities, ought not to be thought so wanting in goodness and wisdom, as to have constituted a universe, which demands so dreadful and degrading a method of enforcing obedience, as the penal sufferings of a God. This doctrine of an Infinite substitute, suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its severe character is overlooked. Let me then set it before you, in new terms, and by a new illustration; and if in so doing, I may wound the feelings of some who hear me, I beg them to believe, that I do it with pain, and from no impulse but a desire to serve the cause of truth. Suppose, then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you, that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an Infinite Being, the partaker

of his own Supreme Divinity; suppose him to declare, that this execution was appointed, as a most conspicuous and terrible manifestation of God's justice, and of the infinite wo denounced by his law; and suppose him to add, that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight, as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue. Would you not tell him that he calumniated his Maker? Would you not say to him, that this central gallows threw gloom over the universe; that the spirit of a government, whose very acts of pardon were written in such blood, was terror, not paternal love; and that the obedience, which needed to be upheld by this horrid spectacle, was nothing worth? Would you not say to him, that even you, in this infancy and imperfection of your being, were capable of being wrought upon by nobler motives, and of hating sin through more generous views; and that much more the angels, those pure flames of love, need not the gallows and an executed God, to confirm their loyalty? You would all so feel at such teaching as I have supposed; and yet how does this differ from the popular doctrine of atonement? According to this doctrine, we have an Infinite Being sentenced to suffer as a substitute the death of the cross, a punishment more ignominious and agonizing than the gallows, a punishment reserved for slaves and the vilest malefactors; and he suffers this punishment, that he may show forth the terrors of God's law, and strike a dread of sin through the universe.—I am indeed aware that multitudes, who profess this doctrine, are not accustomed to bring it to their minds distinctly in this light; that they do not ordinarily regard the death of Christ, as a criminal execution, as an infinitely dreadful infliction of justice, as

intended to show, that, without an infinite satisfaction, they must hope nothing from God. Their minds turn by a generous instinct from these appalling views, to the love, the disinterestedness, the moral grandeur and beauty of the sufferer; and through such thoughts they make the cross a source of peace, gratitude, love, and hope; thus affording a delightful exemplification of the power of the human mind to attach itself to what is good and purifying in the most irrational system. Not a few may shudder at the illustration which I have here given; but in what respects it is unjust to the popular doctrine of atonement, I cannot discern. I grieve to shock sincere Christians, of whatever name; but I grieve more for the corruption of our common faith, which I have now felt myself bound to expose.

I have a second objection to this doctrine of Infinite atonement. When examined minutely, and freed from ambiguous language, it vanishes into air. It is wholly delusion. The Trinitarian tells me, that, according to his system, we have an infinite substitute; that the Infinite God was pleased to bear our punishment, and consequently, that pardon is made sure. But I ask him, Do I understand you? Do you mean that the Great God, who never changes, whose happiness is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, that this Eternal Being really bore the penalty of my sins, really suffered and died? Every pious man, when pressed by this question, answers, No. What then does the doctrine of Infinite atonement mean? Why, this; that God took into union with himself our nature, that is, a human body and soul; and these bore the suffering for our sins; and, through his union with these, God may be said to have borne it himself. Thus this

vaunted system goes out — in words. The Infinite victim proves to be a frail man, and God's share in the sacrifice is a mere fiction. I ask with solemnity, Can this doctrine give one moment's ease to the conscience of an unbiassed, thinking man? Does it not unsettle all hope, by making the whole religion suspicious and unsure? I am compelled to say, that I see in it no impression of majesty, or wisdom, or love, nothing worthy of a God; and when I compare it with that nobler faith, which directs our eyes and hearts to God's essential mercy, as our only hope, I am amazed that any should ascribe to it superior efficacy, as a religion for sinners, as a means of filling the soul with pious trust and love. I know, indeed, that some will say, that, in giving up an infinite atonement, I deprive myself of all hope of divine favor. To such, I would say, You do wrong to God's mercy. On that mercy I cast myself without a fear. I indeed desire Christ to intercede for me. I regard his relation to me as God's kindest appointment. Through him, 'grace and truth come' to me from Heaven, and I look forward to his friendship, as among the highest blessings of my whole future being. But I cannot, and dare not ask him, to offer an infinite satisfaction for my sins; to appease the wrath of God; to reconcile the Universal Father to his own offspring; to open to me those arms of Divine mercy, which have encircled and borne me from the first moment of my being The essential and unbounded mercy of my Creator is the foundation of my hope, and a broader and surer the universe cannot give me.

IX. I now proceed to the last consideration, which the limits of this discourse will permit me to urge. It has been more than once suggested, but deserves to be dis-

tinctly stated. I observe, then, that Unitarianism promotes piety, because it is a rational religion. By this, I do not mean, that its truths can be fully comprehended; for there is not an object in nature or religion, which has not innumerable connexions and relations beyond our grasp of thought. I mean, that its doctrines are consistent with one another, and with all established truth. Unitarianism is in harmony with the great and clear principles of revelation; with the laws and powers of human nature; with the dictates of the moral sense; with the noblest instincts and highest aspirations of the soul; and with the lights, which the universe throws on the character of its author. We can hold this doctrine without self-contradiction, without rebelling against our rational and moral powers, without putting to silence the divine monitor in the breast. And this is an unspeakable benefit; for a religion, thus coincident with reason, conscience, and our whole spiritual being, has the foundations of universal empire in the breast; and the heart, finding no resistance in the intellect, yields itself wholly, cheerfully, without doubts or misgivings, to the love of its Creator.

To Trinitarianism we object, what has always been objected to it, that it contradicts and degrades reason, and thus exposes the mind to the worst delusions. Some of its advocates, more courageous than prudent, have even recommended 'the prostration of the understanding' as preparatory to its reception. Its chief doctrine is an outrage on our rational nature. Its three persons, who constitute its God, must either be frittered away into three unmeaning distinctions, into sounds signifying nothing; or they are three conscious agents, who cannot, by any human art or metaphysical device, be made to coalesce into

one being; who cannot be really viewed as one mind, having one consciousness and one will. Now a religious system, the cardinal principle of which offends the understanding, very naturally conforms itself throughout to this prominent feature, and becomes prevalently irrational. He, who is compelled to defend his faith in any particular by the plea, that human reason is so depraved through the fall, as to be an inadequate judge of religion, and that God is honored by our reception of what shocks the intellect, seems to have no defence left against accumulated absurdities. According to these principles, the fanatic, who exclaimed, 'I believe, because it is impossible,' had a fair title to canonization. Reason is too Godlike a faculty, to be insulted with impunity. Accordingly Trinitarianism, as we have seen, links itself with several degrading errors; and its most natural alliance is with Calvinism, that cruel faith, which, stripping God of mercy and man of power, has made Christianity an instrument of torture to the timid, and an object of doubt or scorn to hardier spirits. I repeat it, a doctrine, which violates reason like the Trinity, prepares its advocates, in proportion as it is incorporated into the mind, for worse and worse delusion. It breaks down the distinctions and barriers between truth and falsehood. It creates a diseased taste for prodigies, fictions, and exaggerations, for startling mysteries, and wild dreams of enthusiasm. It destroys the relish for the simple, chaste, serene beauties of truth. Especially when the prostration of understanding is taught as an act of piety, we cannot wonder, that the grossest superstitions should be devoured, and that the credulity of the multitude should keep pace with the forgeries of imposture and fanaticism. The history of the church is the best comment on the ef-

fects of divorcing reason from religion; and if the present age is disburdened of many of the superstitions, under which Christianity and human nature groaned for ages, it owes its relief in no small degree to the reinstating of reason in her long violated rights.

The injury to religion, from irrational doctrines when thoroughly believed, is immense. The human soul has a unity. Its various faculties are adapted to one another. One life pervades it; and its beauty, strength, and growth, depend on nothing so much, as on the harmony and joint action of all its principles. To wound and degrade it in any of its powers, and especially in the noble and distinguishing power of reason, is to inflict on it universal injury. No notion is more false, than that the heart is to thrive by dwarfing the intellect; that perplexing doctrines are the best food of piety; that religion flourishes most luxuriantly in mists and darkness. Reason was given for God as its great object; and for him it should be kept sacred, invigorated, clarified, protected from human usurpation, and inspired with a meek self-reverence.

The soul never acts so effectually or joyfully, as when all its powers and affections conspire; as when thought and feeling, reason and sensibility, are called forth together by one great and kindling object. It will never devote itself to God with its whole energy, whilst its guiding faculty sees in him a being to shock and confound it. We want a harmony in our inward nature. We want a piety, which will join light and fervor, and on which the intellectual power will look benignantly. We want religion to be so exhibited, that, in the clearest moments of the intellect, its signatures of truth will grow brighter; that instead of tottering, it will gather strength and stability from the progress of the human mind. These

wants we believe to be met by Unitarian Christianity, and therefore we prize it as the best friend of piety.

I have thus stated the chief grounds, on which I rest the claim of Unitarianism to the honor of promoting an enlightened, profound, and happy piety.

Am I now asked, why we prize our system, and why we build churches for its inculcation? If I may be allowed to express myself in the name of conscientious Unitarians, who apply their doctrine to their own hearts and lives, I would reply thus: We prize and would spread our views, because we believe that they reveal God to us in greater glory, and bring us nearer to him, than any other. We are conscious of a deep want, which the creation cannot supply, the want of a Perfect Being, on whom the strength of our love may be centred, and of an Almighty Father, to whom our weaknesses, imperfections, and sorrows may find resource; and such a Being and Father, Unitarian Christianity sets before us. For this we prize it above all price. We can part with every other good. We can endure the darkening of life's fairest prospects. But this bright, consoling doctrine of One God, even the Father, is dearer than life, and we cannot let it go. Through this faith, every thing grows brighter to our view. Born of such a Parent, we esteem our existence an inestimable gift. We meet everywhere our Father, and his presence is as a sun shining on our path. We see him in his works, and hear his praise rising from every spot which we tread. We feel him near in our solitudes, and sometimes enjoy communion with him more tender than human friendship. We see him in our duties, and perform them more gladly, because they are the

best tribute we can offer our Heavenly Benefactor. Even the consciousness of sin, mournful as it is, does not subvert our peace; for in the mercy of God, as made manifest in Jesus Christ, we see an inexhaustible fountain of strength, purity, and pardon for all who, in filial reliance, seek these heavenly gifts. Through this faith, we are conscious of a new benevolence springing up to our fellow creatures, purer and more enlarged than natural affection. Towards all mankind we see a rich and free love flowing from the common Parent, and touched by this love, we are the friends of all. We compassionate the most guilty, and would win them back to God.—Through this faith, we receive the happiness of an ever enlarging hope.—There is no good too vast for us to anticipate for the universe or for ourselves, from such a Father as we believe in. We hope from him, what we deem his greatest gift, even the gift of his own Spirit, and the happiness of advancing forever in truth and virtue, in power and love, in union of mind with the Father and the Son. We are told, indeed, that our faith will not prove an anchor in the last hour. But we have known those, whose departure it has brightened; and our experience of its power, in trial and peril, has proved it to be equal to all the wants of human nature. We doubt not, that, to its sincere followers, death will be a transition to the calm, pure, joyful mansions prepared by Christ for his disciples. There we expect to meet that great and good Deliverer. With the eye of faith, we already see him looking round him with celestial love on all of every name, who have imbibed his spirit. His spirit; his loyal and entire devotion to the will of his Heavenly Father; his universal, unconquerable benevolence, through which he freely gave from his pierced side

his blood, his life for the salvation of the world; this divine love, and not creeds, and names, and forms, will then be found to attract his supreme regard. This spirit we trust to see in multitudes of every sect and name; and we trust, too, that they, who now reproach us, will at that day recognise, in the dreaded Unitarian, this only badge of Christ, and will bid him welcome to the joy of our common Lord. We desire to glorify God, to promote a purer, nobler, happier piety. Even if we err in doctrine, we think, that these motives should shield us from reproach; should disarm that intolerance, which would exclude us from the church on earth, and from our Father's house in heaven.

1st Series. No. 160.

AN

INDIVIDUAL FAITH.

By Rev. GEORGE E. ELLIS.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

November, 1840.

Price 3 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, SCHOOL STREET.

AN

INDIVIDUAL FAITH.

The scriptures have been thoroughly and faithfully studied for the sake of discovering in their words or implications, a system of faith which might serve as a standard for all Christians. Again and again has this been proved a fruitless task. Let us then leave off making systems for others, and inquire each for himself. We propose in this essay to discuss two subjects which have many practical bearings. First, the importance of having an individual faith, and the conditions for obtaining it. Second, to what degree we may properly confine our sympathy to the interests of our distinguishing religious opinions, and to those who hold them with us.

I. It is a question often put into the mouths of half converted savages, and of some undecided members of a Christian community, — 'how can I tell what mode of belief, or what set of doctrines is the right one, seeing that you all differ among yourselves?' This question is often considered a smart one, a triumphant one, one which is absolutely unanswerable; but it is in

truth a question which a reasonable man ought to be ashamed to put, inasmuch as the very question itself admits that others are satisfied about their own opinions, however much they may differ in them; and of course the same process which has satisfied their minds, will satisfy other minds, and among them your mind.

Let us consider the importance and the character of an individual faith, without reference to any of the lesser doctrinal differences of sects, but to the large foundations common to all believers. It is important, yes, absolutely essential, that every individual ascertain them for himself, as they apply to himself, as they are intelligible to himself, and satisfactory to himself. Of course the same arguments as to this matter, which are of weight in reference to the great foundations of faith, will apply according to the degrees of their importance to all doctrines. Many men secure to themselves peace of mind, by not thinking at all. But if you would think and still be satisfied, the only way is to think for yourselves. Trust to no other to dictate your faith, any more than you would trust to another to draw in through his lungs, the breath which is to support your life. St. Paul says, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Let him know what he believes, why he believes, and how he believes. Let him be persuaded, let him be fully persuaded, and let him be fully persuaded in his own mind. It is absolutely amazing how many men there are, who think they can attain a faith from others, from reading books, or hearing lectures; indeed, who seem to think it the business of others to implant faith in their minds, without any effort of their own. It is as if the very soil should refuse to have any part in the production of its fruits, and should look to the sower of

the seed, to the sky and the air, the sun, and shower, and dew, to perfect its productions. Aid they will offer, valuable and essential aid, but not such aid as will render useless the operation of its own laws and powers. So it is with large numbers in every Christian community. Yet we are told of nominal Christians, of those who have attended Christian ordinances, and have never been convinced; of those who have been hearing and talking about religion all their lives, and yet have no settled faith in it. Such persons are often referred to with an implied hint, that after all there must be something doubtful in religion, or it would not thus fail of its effect. Of consequence, their example has a bad influence over superficial minds, whereas, in truth, they should only be regarded as examples of the utter inefficiency of a faith, which is not individually formed and attested within each heart.

That I may not adopt an extreme in arguing this subject, I will begin with admitting that the faith and belief of some, should and does, influence others. All the faith which many men have, comes not from their own minds, but from the apparent convictions and professions of others. Some attend church as much because others do, as from any better reason; and whatever good they receive from attending, is rather from an incidental and wayside hearing of the word, than from any fixed purpose of their own. By a sick bed and at a funeral, the hope and confidence of some will touch the hearts of others, rather than any persuasion or feelings of their own. Some believe simply because others do; so to speak, they are provoked or instigated to believe. They see others professing certain opinions, and this sets them upon professing some likewise, either the same or different ones — if so be

they may be called opinions. Thus, I say, the belief of some should, and does influence others. We are affected by the faith of our fellow-men, and are induced to imitate it. But we cannot believe what others believe, simply because they believe it. This is a point which we must well understand, and clearly present to our minds. Our friends and neighbors maintain their own individual convictions, upon grounds satisfactory to themselves. We are bound to respect their professions and to trust in their sincerity. But we are not bound to believe, or to endeavor to believe what they believe; we must arrive at our own convictions in some other way than merely by receiving their reflected light. In other words, the prevalence of certain doctrines and tenets of belief, is no sufficient basis for our own faith in them. A complete survey of religious opinions, would lead us to wonder at the scanty evidence, or reasons on which certain forms or doctrines of faith have been held. If the founders of religious sects had but made sure of their theories and doctrines before they professed them, or offered them to others, how much strife and controversy, and anxiety of mind would have been saved to the world. A morbid imagination, a distempered fancy, an eccentric tendency of speculation, has brought forth some new doctrine, or set some old doctrine in a new light, and has thus, to some degree, confused the former recognized modes of faith. Each sect, not only in Christendom, but in all religions, has some prominent idea on which it is based. Some sects may have two ideas, some have only one; but all must have at least one, or they would not live a year. So the company of believers is divided into little societies, each pressing forward its distinguishing tenet. It is in view of these that

some individuals ask how they are to distinguish the right. They seem to feel compelled to choose one or the other, or to have no faith at all, and the result as frequently is that such observers neglect to form any faith, as that they select one or another from the forms which may be known to them. Here is the origin of that large company of men who are classified as nominal believers. There is scarcely any single cause which has exercised so bad an influence upon faith in general, as the reception of irrational tenets, the prominence of trifling distinctions among Christians, and the warring of sects, who often contend the more fiercely the less they differ. For, mark the operation of such influences. An observer, who has a moderate degree of intelligence and conscientiousness, may be disposed to look at the differences rather than the harmonies of those around him. He sees them contending for points of faith which to him have no consequence whatever, and insisting upon this or that tenet or practice, which in all sincerity he cannot force himself to regard as either interesting or reasonable. He is therefore compelled to the conclusion, that the differences among Christians have no better foundation than prejudice, or a wish to believe and insist upon something; that the forms of faith are imaginative and matters of mere idle speculation. From this conclusion many are disposed to leap to another most disastrous and ruinous in its influence, that the very essence of religion itself, the basis of all these differences of opinion, is equally a matter of mere fancy and idle speculation. If you could look as through a glass into the breasts of some of those whom you daily converse with, you would there discover a secret mistrust of the reality of all religious faith, founded upon this very know-

ledge, that the diversities of belief upon which so much stress is laid are matters of mere prejudice, or educational bias, not important, not real. The truth is simply this, that the differences among Christians are only in part founded in conscience or scripture; as for the rest, the other part, they are founded in temperament, in taste, in preference, or some other individual characteristic. It would have saved a world of trouble and strife if Christians, when opposing each other, would have fairly ascribed their differences, as in truth they ought to do — not wholly to conscience or to their interpretations of scripture, but to their own individual tastes; if they had said, I hold to this tenet, or worship in this church, or coincide in this measure, not because God commands it, or the Savior enjoins it—for in truth I cannot adduce their authority for either this or that—but because I prefer it, because it meets my ideas of propriety or expediency, it satisfies me, it edifies me, I love it, and therefore I adopt it. For reasons like these, and others which might be mentioned, I maintain that we cannot expect to believe what others believe, simply because they believe it.

And there is another prevailing opinion, which, whether it be true or false, should impress upon us the importance of having an individual faith. We often hear it asserted, that all modes of Christian faith are essentially the same, that a sincere profession, an honest obedience of either of them is enough, they all comprehend enough of truth to secure the safety of their disciples. This statement, though often uttered by the noble and elevated charity of true Christian piety, as often is adopted as the mantle of laxity and indifference. In one sense it does express a sublime truth, which our own experience of the world

fully attests, for we see the fruit of piety grafted upon all Christian creeds. Yet we have equal reason to surmise that all the religion which some persons possess utters itself in this charitable opinion. Two centuries ago there appeared in England a book of a very remarkable character, by one of the most eminent scholars of the time. It was entitled the Religion of a Physician, and it exhibits such talent and skill, as to be generally read to this day — one of the few books that survive a century. It expresses opinions upon the origin, evidence and character of Christianity, upon church discipline and authority, upon prayer and the ordinances, and upon the foundations and requisitions of faith. As soon as the book was circulated, its author was at once claimed as a disciple by each of the then existing sects. From the extremes of Roman Catholicism and Quakerism, comprehending all forms of Christian faith between, he was proudly and eagerly seized upon as the champion, now of this and now of that struggling party. Now mark the consequence. It was a great question with the generations contemporaneous and subsequent to the time of the writer, whether he had any faith at all, and he has been blamed for sarcasm and levity. True, his character as a firm and honest Christian believer is now proved beyond all question, and the peculiarities of his book are ascribed to his taste and style, still, this example, were there no other, would justify some little caution in explaining the assertion that all forms of Christian faith embrace essentially the same truths. At any rate, this assertion is a very important one, and it should not rashly be made. Moreover, we all readily perceive that this assertion is an expression of individual faith. Whoever makes it assumes a right of decision to

which he can be entitled only on the condition that he has thought out and established a faith of his own. I have thus far been endeavoring to exhibit the importance of forming an individual faith, on these grounds — that we cannot believe what others believe simply because they believe it — that the reception of what appear to us irrational tenets, warns us to beware lest we confound divine truths with human fancies — and that we should be on our guard against laxity and indifference.

Enough then has been said as to the importance of having an individual faith. The great question now is, how is it to be obtained. Some will advise a search among all sects until we find the truth — the reading of books — the going from one church to another — attending all lectures — and the holding of conferences upon the subject with those who profess the different prevailing sentiments. Some give such advice, and there are those who follow it. But for myself I should have scruples as to giving it, and I would not follow it. The best result which could ensue from it, would be the conclusion, that there is something sincere and good and true among all sects. Yet common charity, and certainly Christian charity, would lead us to start with this admission. But results not so good are equally likely to follow from this course. For some who adopt it, meet with many discouragements, imbibe many prejudices, and altogether they often come out of such a trial with a strange patchwork of doctrines and creeds hanging over them, rather than with any well defined and attested principles of belief wrought into their minds. When we see a person thus going about in search of a faith, we are led to fear that there is something wanting in himself — that he is looking to others to do for him

what he ought to do, and what he can do for himself. And we conclude that he adopts this course, not so much to avoid trouble, as from the want of a manly and considerate confidence in himself. An individual faith must resemble in its characteristics other individual possessions — it must be peculiar to each person, his own — partaking of the individuality of his own life, history, experience and character. We should each of us feel desirous of possessing some ground of belief, assured in our own minds, and verified by our personal knowledge and experience. This one and that one, with whom we meet familiarly every day, profess certain convictions of their own; it may be that after reflection we may coincide with them. If we do, then they become our own convictions, as much as our features, tastes, and characters are our own. The great verification, the standing miracle which proudly justifies a belief in Christian truth, is not the fact that there are millions of nominal adherents to it in the world, but that there are five, or ten, or a hundred, in each generation or in each community, who by independent thought, and individual conviction have become its disciples. The green fruit upon a vine or tree may catch a faint shade of coloring by mere proximity to that which is already ripe, and so may we take from each other an apparent faith — an outward show of belief; but there must be a sound heart, a healthful circulation, a free communication with the spring of life, or there will be no bloom, no ripeness.

Admitting then this general position, that an individual faith must partake of our own individual characteristics and peculiarities, we may readily specify some of the conditions upon which we may secure an individual faith.

1 First of all, in endeavoring to arrive at some convictions in our minds as to the tenets of belief common to all Christians, or to select among the disputed points where Christians differ in opinion, we must feel a personal interest in the matter; we must enter upon the search as if we expected to find something worth finding. We must feel as much concern in establishing our belief as we do in establishing our characters. You would not pass through the community under the protection of another man's common sense, or with the credit of another man's integrity. In seeking for competence or wealth, it certainly would afford you little satisfaction in your own poverty to know that others are rich. Neither ought you to merge your interest or convictions concerning religion in the interest or convictions of others. Feel that you are personally concerned in it, that you must search, think and reason for yourself, as the Israelites gathered up the manna, every man for himself, and no man for his neighbor. You are to live and die as an individual, with sorrows and joys, faith and doubt of your own. Be then a whole individual; as you have a burden to bear which no man can take from your shoulders, learn how to bear it. Do not speak of religion so much as being a human interest, a common interest of men, but as your own interest, something which is certainly worth as much as honesty, but which is no credit or benefit to you, unless it is your own honesty. Such then is the first condition for obtaining an individual faith, that we each feel an individual interest in forming our belief, as we do in forming our characters.

2. A second condition to this end is, that each of us use the means which exist in ourselves and in our own

reach, for thinking out and establishing our religious convictions. He only can properly seek for aid who has done all that he can do for himself. All assistance, whether it be that of charity or advice, is most frequently thrown away upon those who are always requiring it from others, and doing nothing for themselves. And the simplest minded, the wholly untaught man, has means in his own heart, in his eyes and ears, for forming and testing those convictions upon which a strong faith depends. The provocatives to believe or to disbelieve, continually assail us all. Our thoughts — for we all have thoughts — busy themselves whether we will or not. They seize hold of, and grapple with the mysteries in the midst of which we live. We are all tried by doubts, and doubts are not what they are too frequently thought to be, arguments against belief, but merely signs, that he who experiences them has not as yet assured his belief. They do not hang over the truth, but over our minds ; like clouds, which certainly do not extinguish the sun, but which intercept our view of it. Here then each of us has a mind furnished with thoughts, which set themselves in motion, and tried by doubts, unless we displace them by attested truths. In ordinary every day life, men do not require more materials than these to begin their work, unless they are criminally indolent, and when they are so, others must labor for them ; others may supply their wants, but they cannot give them the healthful appetite, nor the honest enjoyment which would have followed their own labor. The case is precisely the same with those who have neglected to use the means within their reach to work out their own convictions. They are men without faith, who wander up and down as a burden and a sorrow to those who have a faith,

who are distressed by their example, and who must exert the influence which will indirectly affect their souls, though not with the living power which would belong to their own convictions. How simple is the condition — "hast thou faith — have it to thyself." Earn it and treasure it up, amid the discipline and struggle of your heart, in the thoughts which come to you morning and evening, in the relations of home and society which you sustain, in the temptations which try your integrity, in the retrospect of sickness, in the shrinking of your soul from the tomb which opens for the body. Plant the seed in your own breast — ignorance is no barrier, poverty no preventive; know yourself, study yourself, deal honestly by yourself, and you will find that happy and inestimable good will follow from this condition for attaining an individual faith.

3. In the third and last condition must be comprised the purpose not only of all occasions for religious instruction, but the faithful use of the other well assured means for forming and strengthening our convictions — prayer and the study of the Bible, sympathy with and respect for the faith of others. There are many and great helps ready for us in seeking for an individual faith. Prayer is a help as essential and needful as the first lispings of the child when it is learning to express its wants and to understand what is addressed to it. The Bible, too, is the treasure house of the faith of others; so that its words have almost become revelations, they have so often been used in expressing and strengthening devout convictions. We must never allow ourselves to think or to speak slightingly of any doctrine or observance which enters into the faith of another. For if we could search his heart we

should see that his convictions are based upon the same foundation as our own. The very fact, that by a way different from our own he has arrived at the same eminence from which he looks out tranquilly upon the mysteries of life, and upward in hope to God,—this fact is one of the best helps which we could have to confirm our own convictions. Let us find strength then in the faith of others. Let what has been revered for ages, and loved for ages, and believed for ages, pass for something with us. If it does not aid our faith, it enters into the faith of others, and we must respect all that concerns the soul, if we would fully confide in what concerns our own souls. All these helps to our own convictions will bring their aid when most desired, after we have been faithful in the use of the means which are in our own keeping. We know what labor is needful in forming a character, in developing and instructing a mind, and we know that there are some parts of the labor in which no man can help another, but it is invariably the case that the more faithfully he employs his own means, the more benefit he derives from the means of others. Let us remember too, that time is needful to arrange and confirm the convictions of our souls on the great truths which concern us. Let me add in conclusion, the simple caution or advice, be willing to differ from others, if your convictions so lead you, and to have them differ from you, without presuming to censure or to judge them. Do not begin your religious inquiries with the expectation of coming to the same conclusions with others, or to none at all. Unity of faith is desirable, but sincerity of faith is essential, strength of faith is invaluable; and if you would have sincerity and strength of faith, you must be willing to be the sole professor of any

conviction which solemnly and deeply is impressed upon your mind.

We have restricted our remarks to the mere question of individual *belief*, but let us not wholly neglect the mention of the practice and obedience which faith requires. One word of advice which was spoken when the Christian Church was first disturbed by controversies, will do for us now. In the first great controversy, fifteen hundred years ago, in the midst of tumult and passion, a Christian, a lover of peace, who lived in obscurity, and whose name, like that of many other good, but humble men, has perished, rose up and said, "Brethren, the things to be believed are few, the things to be done are many, but you behave yourselves as if the contrary of this were true."

II. Our second topic is, to what degree we may properly confine our sympathy to the interests of our distinguishing religious opinions, and to those who hold them with us? St. Paul has given us a precept which will aid us in answering this question: 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.'

The distinction which men would naturally make in dividing their sympathies to the various objects of duty or affection, the apostle clearly justifies. 'Do good to all men, especially to those who share your faith and hopes.' Christianity in introducing into the world the new commandment of love to all men, was far from merging all natural and peculiar sympathies in a general glow of philanthropy. The doing good unto all men, a general philanthropy, the very essence, the foundation law, the new commandment of love, the apostle most certainly recommends and urges; but he makes an especial mention of

this obligation of sympathy and love, for those who share our own religious belief. His precept, however, has often been interpreted as teaching much more, and something very different from what the apostle had in view. It has been applied not only to mark the difference of a Christian's relative regard for a Christian or a heathen, but as the measurement of Christian sympathy for the different sects of Christians. As if he said, love the company of Christian believers, and love individuals in that company just in proportion as they agree with you. Even more than this, some have drawn from his advice, as if he had said, love those who embrace your own doctrines, and hate those who, thinking you in the wrong, have other doctrines of their own. We need not stay to inquire whether the apostle ever contemplated the variety and number of sects into which the company of Christian believers is now divided, or whether he has given us a scale by which to measure our regard for them in exact proportion as their belief coincides with our own. Every line of doctrine or advice which we draw from him, must be interpreted in his own elevated and catholic spirit, or it will but poorly assimilate with the general tenor of his lessons. It is sufficient to say, that, as to the broad distinction between heathen and Christian, on which he based a difference of sympathy and love, he allowed the feelings of the Christian to differ only in degree, for his brother Christian or for the heathen. He recommended no animosity, no strife, but love to all, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

But seeing that the company of believers is divided into sects many and various, it is but natural for us, if we by circumstance or choice, are ranked with either of them,

to inquire whether the apostle's general doctrine will admit of an application in particular cases; if while we honor and love the Christian more than the heathen, we should honor and love our own sect, more than any, or all other sects?

This directly brings before us the important question, to what degree we may allow our peculiar interest in the spread of our own peculiar religious opinions, how far we may confine our sympathy to those who believe as we do? This question undoubtedly will apply to our other relations, as well as to our religious relations; to our political, social, philanthropical and national predilections, for one line of thought, belief and conduct. The question will decide for us how far our peculiar sympathy for what we love, and for those who love the same things as we do, is to exceed our general regard for all men. The great principles of truth which are to settle this question, as regards our peculiar religious opinions, will apply to all our other opinions. Any one who wishes may apply whatever principle or direction our inquiry may set before us, to any other subject which he may please; be it politics or social sympathies.

Let us, then, inquire how far we may bind around those who agree with us in doctrinal belief, the bond of our closest affection; thus necessarily excluding those who differ from us, from our most intimate attachment; how far we may and ought to favor our own sect, and to refuse to countenance or aid other sects.

I call this question an important one. A conscientious man will at once perceive its many relations to opinions and conduct. The existence of many sects, with churches of their own, with prayers, services, charities and interests

of their own, will often present the question before every sincere and reflecting person. He will ask himself how he is to treat his two neighbors, if he on the right hand agrees with him, and he on the left hand differs from him; whether he is to aid objects in which he does not and cannot fully sympathise; whether, while he is working with both his hands to advance a cause which he loves and values, he may now and then allow his little finger to undermine his own work, and to encourage another. The question will come before us as we mingle in common society, as we listen to philanthropic appeals, as we subscribe our aid to this or that institution, and it will go with us over the threshold of the house of God, warming or chilling the spirit of our prayers, and quickening or deadening the degree of faith with which we contemplate the divided church of one Master and Lord. In pursuing this question, the first suggestion which presents itself before we answer it is this. How severe, though tacit a censure, does the very question itself pass upon the religious animosities, the miserable, contracted clanships of the partisans of contending sects, who hate each other just in proportion as they love themselves. The question before us, calmly put, is of itself answer and argument, and a sentence of excommunication against that narrow, wretched zeal, which identifies the honor of God and Christianity, the hope and salvation of the whole world, with the success of this or that bundle of tenets, which makes full sympathy in faith and doctrine, to be the condition of good neighborhood. We need no reasoning, no examination of any apostolic language, to cry down on the instant, without a moment's compromise, every manifestation of such a spirit as this. It is not of God; but if there be a Beel-

zebub, then this is some of his work. Most certainly, if we have a faith of our own, it must engage our affections. This would be a natural tendency of our hearts; a tendency which God has implanted in them. But there are other affections which God has implanted in the heart, and other obligations by which he has bound it; there must then be an harmonious action between the impulses of our faith, and the just exercise of all our affections. We must have large sympathies for our neighbors; we must be faithful to all our obligations to them; remembering that if they differ from us, we too differ from them; we need their charity as much as they need ours. We are bound to make life as pleasant as possible to all around us — and oh, for conscience' sake, for the sake of that blessed doctrine whose corner-stone we all acknowledge to be love, let us not imagine that the interests of our own sect should be so exclusively dear to us, that we of right may make the society in which we live, nothing better than a mere nest of wasps. Still the question comes back to us, after this sad answer, which it has often practically received, has been frowned down, how far may we love and labor to advance our own faith, to the exclusion of, and want of sympathy for, the faith of those who differ from us. The question is not easily answered; reflection upon it presents its difficulties; it concerns some of the best and some of the worst of human passions; it has much to do with conscience, and something with obstinacy, perverseness, narrowness of mind, and an inability or an indisposition to take large views of truth; from an elevated position above the cloud and smoke of strife. The answer to the question, will however turn mainly upon three other questions. Thus while we ask how far we may confine our sympathies

to the interests of our own chosen faith, the answer will depend upon these three questions: — 1. What our faith is? 2. How we obtained it? 3. How much we value it?

1. First, then, what is our own faith? Is it a faith which differs essentially from that of others — which leads us to censure or to tremble for others who do not coincide in it? If so, before attempting to decide how far we may exclusively favor it, we may well employ ourselves in re-considering it. There are some persons, the very essence of whose faith leads them to discountenance and to tremble for the faith of others. The question then arises, whether we are any of us right even in maintaining, and much more in exclusively favoring, any tenets which at once shut out from our bosoms all respect for, and sympathy with, the conscientious belief of other men. Some say we have such a right — 'that scripture is an authoritative guide — that whatever we find there is to be received on its own authority. We are not to question it, but must take it as we find it, nothing doubting — our own reason has nothing to do with it, neither have our social sympathies. Still less may we refuse to believe what scripture appears plainly to assert, on the ground that it would make us exclusive and uncharitable.' But a man cannot cordially embrace a faith on the authority of scripture, or on any other authority which leads him to censure and to tremble for others, as conscientious, as devout, and as well versed in the scriptures as himself. Our wiser sensibilities, our cool and deliberate judgment, will not admit of this discord between faith and duty. Our peculiar regard for our own faith will then depend upon what our faith may be, and thus we may be urged to improve our faith if we find it leading us to spiritual pride

or uncharitableness. Yet while there is excess here, there is manifestly a true medium elsewhere. Our faith may not differ essentially from that of others, it may not lead us to censure or tremble for others who differ from us, and yet there may be something in it which induces us to give it all our prayers and all our strength — to advance it above all others — and when we are helping any mode of faith, to help this and no other. No man, when bent upon a long journey, ever walks backwards; nor does he who would build a house aid in pulling it down. Our faith, chosen from among many, undoubtedly will appear to each of us nearer to scripture, better for man, truer and more valuable than any other. If so, it should have our love, as it has our conscience — it should have our alms, as it has our prayers. But let us remember that every living faith has a practical side, as well as a doctrinal side — charity as well as truth enters into it. So then must it appear to others. No man who regards the conscience of another will expect him to aid in impeding or crippling his own honest faith. If these are our convictions, we may proudly hold them up before the world, and say that we will live and die for them, that we will do our utmost for them by honoring and endowing them. And, as it regards the convictions of others, a faith of this kind will lead us to say — fight your own battles — do your own work — you have our best wishes for the success of any truth which you profess or teach, we will do for you all that we can do, without undoing what we have done for ourselves. Go on in your course and we will go on in ours; and depend upon it, if we are all sincere, and keep our consciences with us, and do nothing but what we know to be right, and do that with our

hearts — we shall sooner or later come to some point in our different journeys, whence our path will lead us on together.

2. The manner in which we have obtained our faith will aid us in deciding how far we may feel exclusively attached to it. The large mass of men are not capable of estimating the full force of this question, by any thing which has occurred in their own experience. Many inherit, without large inquiry, the faith of their parents, and know but little of the faith of others. It would be manifestly wrong in them to be the prominent defenders of this tenet, and the zealous antagonist of that, when they understand neither of them. Perhaps the most that can be expected of men in general, is, that their honesty and good will should direct them in their estimate of others and their friendliness to others, rather than a deliberate examination or comparison of sentiments. But some there are whose individual faith is more a matter of experience, choice and labor, and they may have cause to make a broad distinction in their regard to it, above all other forms of faith. The doctrines concerning which Christians disagree, though in comparison with those fundamental and all-important doctrines in which they coincide, they may be called secondary and less essential, have, nevertheless, relations to truth and to individual views of truth, which demand that they be not slighted. Every tenet and doctrine and observance which enters into the religious belief of men, expresses and is connected with some living idea. Some men attain the calm serenity with which they hold their faith, by fighting their way through much strife and darkness. Remember that loathsome dungeons, and the tears of widows and orphans,

and the flames of the stake, and the agonies of inquisitions have vindicated the strength and the reasons of some modes of faith which now stand honored in the eyes of the world, because their first professors preferred what they believed to any thing beside. The manner in which they attained their convictions, at once decided for them how much their convictions were to be loved and preferred. This is a safe criterion; fear not that it will lead you to bigotry. Bigots and martyrs have always been two distinct classes of men — they have no points in common. How have you obtained your faith? Settle this question and your own judgment will at once instruct you how you are to prefer it. If it has come to you with the town or house of your birth, or with the old scripture commentary which your father read — if you know very little about this, and still less about other modes of faith — then you would do very wrong to narrow your sympathies within the limits of your own creed. But if you have labored and struggled with your own eyes and your own thoughts in selecting and establishing your faith — if you see reason to believe that others err from truth, and in so erring impede the progress of improvement — if you honestly believe that your faith, above all others, is taught by the scriptures, and would be the best of all others — then your duty is plain before you. Do the most for what you love most — honor that in all your actions which you honor in your hearts — cherish what you prefer — cling to what you have struggled for. The proper line of duty in this respect will be that which a good and conscientious man will naturally take. His good judgment will always afford him good reasons for his conduct. Though he will never allow himself to speak with rancor

of the sentiments of others, though he will abstain from laying any obstacle, even so much as a hair in magnitude, to the religious zeal of others, he will always be found doing all that he does do upon that side where his conscience will accompany him.

3. Finally, the degree of affection and interest which we severally feel for our own peculiar faith — will aid us to decide the extent to which we may carry our exclusive sympathy for it. Let us learn here a lesson from the zealot and even from the bigot. Let not the strongest of our passions, the most devoted of our purposes, be yielded up to objects of all other kinds of ardent interest, and denied all influence in our religion. Every sincere, conscientious and well instructed believer will identify his own faith with the great interests of the world. The one fold to which all the sheep who hear the voice of the shepherd are finally to be gathered, will be a beautiful reality in his faith — displaying its calm and peaceful prospect far on in the distant future. Who can embrace such a faith as that of a Christian, and not connect with it the best hopes, the truest happiness of the world? If we have not an interest that others should know and love it, we neither know nor love it ourselves. Men who are slow to perform what they know to be their duty, often have a very imperfect idea of what their duty is. We cannot conceive how the faith of a Christian can begin in his heart and evaporate in indifference when it has worked itself so far out of him as to be seen by others. This would be a union of light and darkness, of doubt and certainty. Such a man might make a good beginning, but it would most certainly result in a bad ending. The zeal of a proselytiser is one thing, the consistent

conduct of a man firmly persuaded is another. Liberality is not indifference. It is no worse for us to have sects in reality, than it is to have them in name. If we have the name, let us have the thing; for the name so far separates us — it makes an interval; zeal for what we severally believe to be the truth, will be the best means of bringing us together. The great error which prevails among men is, that they undertake to get rid of their whole duty by doing half of it. They will profess a faith, they will establish a faith, and vindicate a faith, and after all they will merge their sentiments, which were or ought to have been attained by thorough and judicious examination, into an indefinite and general interest in Christian truth. There is one simple condition which covers the whole ground of our subject, and I know not how it will be disputed. Each sect ought at least to use equal zeal in keeping its converts as in making them. When it has toiled and struggled to establish itself and to convince its disciples, it must do something more; it must keep itself established, it must keep its disciples convinced. A striking illustration of this point presents itself to my mind. In England, the Roman Catholic faith was proscribed and legislated almost into silence. For the last century it has revived, and with an energy which marked its better fortunes, it is seeking with hard and untiring efforts to make converts. Throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom, that ancient faith is vindicated and explained. In the restored colleges, and in the humble workshop, in the splendid volume and in the penny tract, its plea is advanced. No pain or toil is spared either by the humblest or the proudest of its disciples, to root out Protestant prejudices which have been gathering strength for ages,

and to enforce by argument, invitation, and the splendor of attractive ceremonies, the elder creed of the kingdom. Every chapel, however humble, has its pulpit, from which the faith is vindicated with untiring effort. The self-denying priest strengthened only by his own dear purpose, gathers there the fortune and here the penny, utters there the joy of hope, and insinuates here the gentlest language of proselytism. And all this is done for the sake of making converts. In Italy, in the stronghold and territory of the same church, where Protestantism cannot lift its voice, the converts are already made. If we seek for the same efforts there from every pulpit, we shall find to our amazement that not one church in ten has a pulpit, and in vain shall we look for a tenth or a hundredth part of the toil and care to instruct the people in their own creed or duty. The converts are already made — the disciples of the faith are born its disciples, and week after week — yes, year after year — may the disciples seek for instruction in the temple, and find it only in the procession, or in the service of the mass, the very words of which they cannot hear. Now what is the consequence? In England, the Catholic faith is a religion of life and progress — its zeal gives it strength and power. The hearts of its disciples are warmed and blessed by it. In Italy, the same faith is decrepit, and torpid. A lurking skepticism, a callous indifference, a mere outward observance, has chilled its life-blood, and frozen its extremities to death.

There are two ways in which Christians, holding different sentiments, may live in quietness; first, by freely giving up their differences and agreeing together; this they will not do, and they must have recourse to the second way — that is, of tiring themselves out by insisting

upon their differences, till they show by earnest and consistent zeal, by honoring in life the doctrine professed in words, which of them has the more patience, and the better influence. One or the other will falter or fail somewhere, and the victory will be with him who can sustain himself, and aid his falling brother in the Christian struggle.

We need not to be over anxious for uniformity of faith. Christendom professed it once, and the present fragments into which it has been riven, show that in its supposed uniformity, there was both flame and fuel which could not be kept apart from each other.

Let no one apply the doctrine which has thus been urged in favor of exclusiveness, for we began with a caution against that unchristian vice or infirmity — not of a zealous believer, but of a proud and self-complacent bigot. Can we not love our own homes, and yet be cheerful visitors in the homes of others? If so, then we can love our own faith, and yet treat with respect and kindness the faith of others. To do this may involve some nice discriminations, which it is difficult to point out. It is a Christian duty, though a difficult duty; and let us remember that Christianity appoints no duty, which it does not furnish us with the means to perform. If there are such things as Christian duties, there is such a thing as a Christian spirit; we can do the duties easily, if we have the spirit.

1st Series. No. 161.

HOW TO SPEND HOLY TIME.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

By Rev. HENRY WARE, Jr.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

December, 1840.

Price 3 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

HOW TO SPEND HOLY TIME.

CHAPTER 1.

SATURDAY EVENING.

One can hardly picture to himself a more grateful scene than is presented by the close of Saturday afternoon in the country. Every thing seems to indicate satisfaction at approaching repose. The laborers, as they return to their homes, bearing the implements of toil, and attended by their cattle, carry in their very movements signs of pleasure that their toils are ended. The weary oxen, as they step sluggishly along, appear conscious of their weekly respite, and the softening light of the west sympathises with the feelings of the sentient creation. As one looks upon such a rural scene at the close of a bright summer's day, while the increasing stillness intimates that it begins to draw towards the first day of the week, he may well be reminded of Southey's beautiful description of the "holy night:"

> "When all created things know and adore
> The Power that made them; insects, beasts, and birds,
> The water-dwellers, herbs, and trees, and stones,
> Yea, earth and ocean, and the infinite heaven
> With all its worlds. * * * The prayer
> Flows from the righteous with intenser love,
> A holier calm succeeds, and sweeter dreams
> Visit the slumbers of the penitent.*

* Thalaba, IX.

It was on such an evening, when the sun had just given his parting look to the blooming and weary world, that David Ellington had come home from his work and was seated with his little family at the evening meal. The day had been sultry and the air was close and oppressive. Jane had therefore taken the table out from the confined apartment into the open air, and spread it under the shadow of the great tree behind the house. There they sat in the cool of the calm twilight, their spirits as even as the hour; and some philosophers might be puzzled to know, whether the expression of the scene without had done most to give the temper to their minds, or the state of their minds bestowed its beauty on the scene. David and Jane were no philosophers; but the thought naturally occurred to them, and they gave the question their own solution.

"One would almost fancy," said Jane, "that the very sky and air were full of feeling and thought; how can they have so much expression of the soul without any soul?"

"He who made them," replied David, "cannot but give an expression to all that he makes; it all bears the mark of his hand; it is therefore adapted to excite feeling in the souls who observe it. The works he has made are suited to the souls he has made."

"And it seems to me that they address the heart just as words do. They mean something, and the eye receives their meaning as the ear does the meaning of words. It seems to me there is no difference, excepting that words are more distinct"

"In that respect the beauty of such an evening as this is like poetry, which suggests sentiment rather than distinct thought; or perhaps more like music, which brings

on a certain state of feeling, and not a definite train of ideas. A piece of music stirs my feelings or puts me in a reverie, and so does a beautiful prospect or a sweet summer's evening."

"That reminds me of what we read of Wilberforce the other day. Speaking of flowers, he said that they seemed to him like the smile on the Father's countenance. So all the beauty of the sky and the earth is like the smile of God; and a smile shows us the disposition of the person just as certainly as any words he can use. This accounts for the *expression* I spoke of. One cannot sit down in the midst of this loveliness without being conscious that it is a Divine presence which makes it lovely."

"As Cowper says," pursued David,

> 'His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,
> Makes all still fairer.'

But if one perceive not his presence, a great element of beauty and pleasure is gone."

"The beauty remains and the divine expression is in it; but the capacity is wanting to perceive it. If we had no eyes, we should know nothing of it; if we had only eyes without feeling, we should know little of it; and we know most of it at those hours when our hearts are most softened by holy thoughts and devout affections. There is never so much beauty in it as on the Sabbath, or perhaps Saturday evening, when we are enjoying the luxury of a passage from toil to repose."

But it will not do to repeat all that was said, though it might help to show how easily the simple and thoughtful can turn to a spiritual channel the conversation suggested by casual circumstances. If men would speak out more

freely what is passing within them, there would be less idle talking.

It was not long before they were interrupted by the arrival of their neighbor John Smith. John had evidently been making an effort at improvement since his morning conversation with David; and he occasionally sought an opportunity to renew the talk with him. So he dropped in now, as he said, just to pass away an hour in friendly chat, for he really did not know what to do with himself.

"The fact is," said he, "Saturday evening is the hardest night in the week to get rid of. 'T is not exactly reputable or proper to be pushing about in the same way as on other evenings, and yet one does not like to be moped up at home. It 's neither work day nor Sunday."

"What is it then," said David.

"Why it 's something between the two."

"That 's the beauty of it to me," said David, "and the very reason why I like it. It is particularly delightful to have a little season of transition between the common affairs of the world and the sacred duties of the Sabbath. I should not like to rush suddenly and without preparation from the one to the other; and this quiet evening is an excellent time for preparation."

"But for my part," answered Smith, "I do not see that any particular preparation is necessary; and I have heard you say a hundred times, that a good man will live so as to have every day a Sabbath as well as Sunday, and be ready at one time as well as another to join immediately in prayer."

"Not a hundred times, John; perhaps two or three."

"Well, not exactly a hundred, to be sure," said Smith, smiling at David's precise way of correcting his extravagance in speech; not exactly a hundred times; but I am

sure I have heard you say so, and I have heard it from the pulpit."

"Very true; and I will not take it back. A man should make every hour holy, and be every minute prepared for worship or for death. But very few men have ever reached such a perfection; and therefore we have no right to act as if we had, and put aside special occasions of preparation. We need them so much the more now, because we hope by and by to need them less."

"But don't you suppose that one would get on faster if he were to begin with making all days alike?"

"No, not at all; and for this reason;—if he were to begin so, he would make Sunday like a week day, and not the week days like Sunday; he could not avoid this. And just so it has happened with all that I ever knew attempt to act on this principle. It was perfectly impossible for them to live every day a life of sober, devout, contemplative deportment, such as belongs to the sabbath and to heaven; they were not advanced enough in holiness for that; and therefore all they could effect toward making all days alike, was to make Sunday a common day. By this means they did make all alike, but they deprived themselves of a great aid to religious improvement, and their characters perceptibly lost ground. Instead of getting six more sabbaths in the week, as they pretended to do, they lost the one they had."

"Then I don't see but that you would give up the six days to the world, and confine religion to the seventh."

"I did not say that, did I? And you don't suppose I meant it, do you?"

"Why perhaps not; but I don't see why it does not follow. For you allow men to be less religious on other days than on Sunday."

"No, that is not what I mean. A man is never allowed to be any thing else than a religious man; he may not be irreligious any day. But then, when he is in the midst of business, and so forth, in common life, he is likely to have his thoughts diverted, and his feelings ruffled, and to be put off his guard, and be tempted in a hundred different ways. He must be very strong and confirmed in a holy life, to be able to get through it all without offence. And how is he to become strong enough? By the help of the sabbath; by resting, thinking, reading, worshipping, on that one day, away from the world and in communion with God. He will then go back to the world stronger and stronger every week, and thus make every week more and more like a perpetual sabbath. Just suppose, if you please, that a man were once a week taken away from the earth and transported into heaven; that there he joined in the pleasures and conversation of its pure inhabitants, and learned to make an exact comparison between their condition and that of men upon earth. How would he feel on returning to the world? Would he not look on it with different eyes? would he not go about its business with his thoughts full of that better world, and would he not be anxious to live so as to become worthy of possessing it hereafter? Why, John, if you were to spend every Sunday actually among the blessed spirits of heaven, you would be haunted by the thought of it all the week long, and after a while you would find no happiness in a day which was not spent in as devout a frame as any sabbath. Don't you think so?"

"To be sure," said Smith; "it could not be otherwise; that is clear enough. And I do not think I should be sorry if it happened to me."

"For I suppose you are not satisfied with your present state," said David, in a tone of half question.

"How can I be?" John asked; "and yet I do not see how I can help it. What can a poor ignorant man like me do?"

"That brings us to the very point," said David. "If you could spend one day a week in the real heaven, you think you should have no difficulty; and I think so too. But as that is impossible, you must do the next best thing,—which is, to use the sabbath for the same end. It seems to me that this is precisely the design of it, and that it may have precisely this effect. It is intended to be a miniature heaven, a specimen of what shall be, an occasion for showing the contrast between a worldly and a divine life; and if you will so occupy the day as to get yourself fully into its spirit, and to taste the enjoyment of a serene and worshipping frame of mind, you will find yourself affected by it on Monday and Tuesday; all life will take a complexion from it; and the renewing of this state of soul every sabbath for months and years, will by and by make it the settled state of your soul. So that at last you will live just as if you had really gone up to heaven once a week, and seen with your own eyes its glories."

"But you do not suppose that heaven is a mere place of rest and pious meditation, do you? It seems to me it must be something more; there must be something *doing* there."

"Yes, undoubtedly; but then, whatever is done must be in accordance with a certain state of mind and heart. That state is essential to the happiness of heaven; neither the work of heaven can be done without it, nor its pleasure enjoyed. So that the important thing is, to get

the soul into that state. When this is accomplished, the satisfaction and the activity will follow.—And this, I think, is the excellence of the sabbath. Six days we are to labor and do our work; we ought to do it in a religious spirit; and that we may be able so to do it, the seventh is made a holy day, which may send us back to our work refreshed and thoughtful."

"Just as Watts expresses it in one of his Hymns," said Jane, "when he says that public worship is *like a little heaven below;* and then he adds,—

> 'Nor all my pleasure, nor my play,
> 'Shall tempt me to *forget* this day.'"

"But for my part, unhappily," said Smith, "I do not find Sunday so much like heaven; and I forget it almost as soon as it is over."

"How happens that?"

Smith said he could not account for it; he supposed it was so with most people; he could not find that Sunday had much influence on men during the week. This led to a good deal of discussion on the value and operation of Christian institutions, and the cause of their apparent inefficacy. A great many reasons were assigned, some very obvious, some very frivolous; but all taken together showed a quantity of obstructions on the part of society and of individuals, which made Jane say at last, that it was almost wonderful Christianity had any effect at all; for it seemed to be the business of men to counteract it as much as possible. "If they were to set themselves on purpose to destroy its impression," she said, "they could hardly invent surer means of doing it, than by the habits they at present indulge."

"There is a sad mistake in all this thing," said David; "and for aught I see, it is growing worse every day.

Even those from whom you would least expect it, fall into the current and help promote the evil. It is only last week that Mr. Hertson, on returning from the city, was telling me of what took place there lately. A great party was given on Saturday evening, where were dancing and other amusements till after midnight. The street was crowded with carriages, and the noise and confusion interrupted the repose of the whole neighborhood. And who do you suppose were guilty of this indecency? Who were they that committed this outrage on the feelings of the sober people of the city, and the established manners of the place? Why, you would suppose of course it could only be the merely frivolous and worldly, who hold in scorn all serious things. And so I said to Mr. Hertson. But no, he said there were present many persons of respectable standing, church-going people, who counted themselves good Christians, communicants, who professed to love the institutions of religion and to be desirous of their good influences. There they were, desecrating the holy season by untimely revelry, disturbing the quiet of their more devout neighbors, and bringing a scandal on the cause of religion."

"But I dare say it was done thoughtlessly," said Smith; "I do not suppose they *meant* to do all this harm."

"Thoughtlessly!" cried David. "What right could they have to be thoughtless in so grave a matter? That is itself a sin in a case like this. To go to work deliberately, by a preparation of several days, to spend a whole night in unfitting themselves for public worship, and then to plead that they did not think of doing harm, is a ridiculous aggravation of the offence. It proves that they had no proper sense of the meaning and worth of the sabbath either to themselves or others. If they had, they

would have cut off their right hands before they would have done what was so certain to unfit them for the right use of the next day. I should like to know how many of them staid away from church in consequence; how many slept at church; how many were thinking all church time of the pleasant or unpleasant occurrences of the evening, instead of worshipping God. I should like to know what was the state of the house in which the indecorum was perpetrated; and who was responsible for the waste of time and the ill example to the domestics and dependants. Mr. Hertson says, that he was told such things are not common; but it is clear, that whoever introduces or countenances them ought to be regarded as an enemy to the community in which he dwells, and an abettor of irreligion and sin."

"But we do not have such doings out here in the country."

"No, thank God, but if other bad fashions of town get into the country at last, this will too. And indeed I fear that we have not much to boast of. We do not throw away our holy opportunities in the same manner, but we are far from using them as we should. Even you, John, who are one of the quiet people, began with complaining that Saturday evening is a heavy time; and now you add that Sunday is not very profitable to you. And why? The only reason must be, that you misuse it. You do not make it a business to prepare for it as it approaches, and to make the most of it as it passes."

John admitted that this was the case, and added that he should be very glad to be guided to the best methods. The conversation did not soon come to a close; but what its purport was, and what were its results, cannot now be related.

CHAPTER II.

SUNDAY NOON.

A REFLECTING Christian often wonders at the apparently trifling efficacy of religious institutions; he perplexes himself to comprehend how it is that such multitudes hear preaching, and yet so few profit by it. A yet greater wonder is it at times, that he himself should be so little the better for his attendance on services of whose value he thinks himself deeply sensible. The minister occasionally tries to explain the matter in a sermon; but his explanation is only partially satisfactory; what seem to him the chief causes do not appear such to men in more exposed walks of life, and the speculations of different active men on the subject, differ as much as their various personal experience. Some ascribe it to the weakness of the preachers, and some to the inattention of the hearers; some to internal and some to external causes; and many, in striving to satisfy their minds on the point, forget to keep a watch over the only causes which are of any moment to themselves.

It is not strange therefore, that when Mr. Hertson had preached a sermon from the text, "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard," there was a good deal of speculation among his hearers as to the justness of his views. Some thought that he refined too much, some that he was not sufficiently discriminating, some that he made too much of faith, some that he was not sufficiently practical, and some that he did not make allowance for the hindrances which the world throws in the way of piety. So they began at the church door, and as the several parties separated on their

way home, they carried on the discussion. If it be one aim of a preacher to make people think, he certainly had hit the mark that once at least.

As no one in the parish lived farther from church than David Ellington, it happened that those who walked the same road with him kept up the discourse during the whole distance; and he had an opportunity to hear opinions on all the different points that were started. When this had been done, and neighbor after neighbor had dropt away each at his own threshold, Jane turned to her husband, and said, "So, — if we may trust what we have been hearing on all sides, preaching does no good, and yet nobody is to blame for it."

"Except the minister," replied David.

"Nay," said his wife, "even Dr. Pillerton, who spoke most harshly, acknowledged that, after all, the preacher does enough to be the making of any man who would take heed to his words. So that, for aught I see, the minister also is free from blame, like every body else; and we have only to wonder how this dreadful waste of religious influences is to be accounted for."

"And yet meantime nothing is more easily accounted for, if you will take it up in single cases and examine them one by one. Men are puzzled, because they want to see through all Christendom at once; but they will find there is no puzzle at all, if they will just sit down and each decide his own case. Describe to me any man's life, and I will tell you at once why it is that preaching does him no good."

While he was saying this, neighbor Smith, who had been walking ahead of our carpenter and his family, and now that none else was in their company desired to join himself to them, had turned back and caught the last sen-

tence. He too had evidently been musing on the topic of the day, and gave vent to his feelings by exclaiming bitterly, "I don't believe that it does any body any good."

"Why, Mr. Smith," exclaimed Jane, "you speak as if you had received a personal affront."

"Then I am sure I ask pardon," said John; "I spoke quick, to be sure, because I had been trying to make it out strait all the way, and I can't do it. I don't see why preaching should not do good, and yet I'm sure it never did any good to me, and I do not see that it does much good any where. Now take this very town, and go over it from one end to the other, and count the people on your fingers, and consider——"

David interrupted him. "That 's the very reason you get so puzzled; you undertake too much; you would explain the case of a thousand people at once, when perhaps you are hardly able to explain one. Let us take one at a time. Let us begin with John Smith; and when we understand his case, we will go to his next neighbor, David Ellington, and sift him; and so on, from door to door."

"Well," said John, "it's chiefly my own case that I care about, and that makes me feel so bad. I don't know that all the sermons I ever heard, have done me the least good in the world."

"Very well;—now the question is, why? Is it because the sermons were poor and unable to do good?"

"I cannot say that of all of them; some poor preaching I have heard, and I have heard some very fine preaching that was worse than the poor; but on the whole, there has been more that was good. And that in fact makes the difficulty;—sermons are very excellent, for the most part, very,—and yet they don't make me any better."

"Then we must seek another cause. I had a neigh-

bor once, who possessed a comfortable house, and a capital lot of ground to till, orchard, mowing-ground, cattle, and a wife who was an admirable dairy-woman. There was not a man in town with a better opportunity to lead a thrifty, fore-handed, prosperous life. What was the reason that he did not? People wondered, when they looked at his fine farm, why in the world it was that the poor man was always behind-hand and going down hill: What was the reason? It could not be the farm — what was it?"

John did not answer, for he more than suspected that his friend was beginning to make a parable out of his own history.

"No," continued David, "it was not the farm that was in fault, but the farmer; he did not use his opportunities, he neglected his land, he lounged about doing nothing, and talked, and smoked, and drank; and as he grew poorer every year, he kept wondering how it could be, that so fine a farm would not support him in plenty and ease."

"He found out at last," whispered John.

"Yes, he found out at last; and then what did he do? He just attended to his business — gave up idle and dissipated habits, and minded his farm; and then he had no difficulty in winning from it a handsome support. Now you are doing with preaching just as you used to do with your farm — neglecting it; and how in the world can you expect it to do you good? How can you be so foolish as to be surprised you have no grain to reap and no abundance on your board, when you have not sowed the seed, nor tended the crop?"

"But that is not quite fair," replied John; "I do not

neglect preaching; there is not a man in the village more constant at meeting than I am."

"Just as you used to live on your farm, — always at home, never away from the homestead; but that availed nothing, while you were an idler. And so in this case, — of what use to be at church, if you do nothing more? Sitting there and taking into your ears the voice of the preacher, is no better than sitting by your back-door and musing on the beauty and fertility of your lands. Nothing can grow up in either case, if this is all you do."

"But that is not all I do."

"Perhaps not quite; you used to go out to work sometimes, and plough and hoe a little, just enough to keep off actual starvation; and about as much as this you do in religion. But suppose you were to make a business of it, as you did of your farm when you took the right turn; suppose you were now to make the most of these religious means, as resolutely as you did of your goodly lands, — do you think you should find reason to complain any longer that you get no good from them?"

They walked on for some moments in silence. John was evidently getting a little new light on the dark subject, which inclined him more to muse than to speak. But he presently felt the silence to be growing awkward, and he therefore broke it, somewhat at a venture, by saying, that after all he did not perceive that he was so very negligent; he could not see but that he did as much as other men.

"*As other men!*" cried David; "there is the rock on which so many are lost; they compare themselves to 'other men.' But you have already said, that *they* are not profited by preaching; how then can their case be any guide to you? It only shows how they are lost, not

how you may be saved. Look to yourself for the present One at a time, as I said before. Let us settle the case of John Smith, before we undertake any other. And now, to begin at the beginning, let us just remember what preaching is for. Is it to be listened to, or to be practised upon?"

"To be practised upon, certainly."

"Very well; which do you do? You listen; but do not practise?"

"Why, there now," said Smith, "that is the very thing I am lamenting, — that I do listen, and yet my practice is not affected."

"To be sure," said David; "you expect the practice to come of itself; you take pains to go and hear, which is the least part of the business, and take no pains to return and act accordingly, which is the essential thing. You think *this* is to come of itself; just as you used to fancy that looking at your fine farm, and talking and boasting about it, would do as well as working upon it. You recollect what we were saying the other Saturday evening about the improvement of that season? Well, you acknowledged that it never occurred to you to use it as a preparation for public worship. The same of Sunday morning. Without any preparation, then, you go to church and hear the sermon. How? that you may really learn something? that you may receive some wholesome advice? that you may be raised to a better way of living? No. You merely *hear*. You just sit and listen;—in at one ear and out at the other, as the saying is. Do you think about it afterward, muse on its truths, try to recall and re impress its doctrine, and turn its advice into real practical rules? I suppose you never pretended to do this. You have not dreamt of any thing more, than just

to hear the sermon. So it is with thousands; therefore no wonder that they are none the better. It would be a wonder indeed if they were. Why, the plain fact is, neighbor Smith, that you and they are doing all you can to *prevent* preaching from doing you any good. If the devil had hired you to help him defeat the ordinances of God, you could not have contrived a more effectual means. To enter on them without preparation, to attend them without any purpose or effort of self-application, to think no more of them afterward, and to spend the rest of the day in visiting, talking, eating, riding or thinking just as on any other day, — all this seems as if expressly designed, a careful plot, to destroy the impressions of God's house, and to prevent the two hours of worship from interrupting the dominion of earth in the soul."

"That 's rather a long sermon, husband," said Jane.

"And a pretty close one, too," added Smith, soberly. "But it is all true, every word of it. Yet I do not see how I can help it. What can I do? what shall I do?"

"I can tell you what rules helped *me*," replied David, "and I dare say that by observing them you will find yourself essentially benefited. Will you try?"

"Let me hear them, and I will tell you."

"They are three. First, listen to the preacher *religiously;* that is, in a devout frame of mind; as if you had just said your prayers, and were holding out your hand to receive the blessing you had asked. Secondly, apply it to yourself all along; say *Amen* to every truth, and say *Yes, I will,* to every good advice. This will excite a strong interest in the matter. Thirdly, think it over *afterward;* don't go at once about other things and forget it all, but retire by yourself, and recall what you

heard and felt; consider what you ought to do in consequence; and lay out a distinct plan of doing accordingly during the week. Then, make it a regular part of every day's business to think over and act upon that particular lesson, and so mix it up with all your prayers and all your work. Follow these rules, and you never will say again that preaching does no good."

"I believe so," said Smith; "and I will try them. But I am afraid I never shall have resolution enough to succeed."

"Do it in faith, nothing doubting;—or if you doubt yourself, do not doubt God, but pray for his blessing till you receive it."

They had for some time reached David's house, and were pausing at the gate to finish their discourse. As they now turned away to separate, Smith stopped and cried out, "One word more, neighbor; pray tell me if you observe these rules yourself."

David hesitated a moment, and then, with an expression of countenance that was half sadness and half a smile, he said, "The question is a very fair one, though I do not see that the answer can affect the goodness of the rules."

"But then I shall have the more courage to undertake them, if I find that they are real things, and not mere words."

"Very well; I told you that they had helped me; and they have, unspeakably; — but I do not live up to them fully, — I do not fully live up to any of my good purposes. But this I can tell you, solemnly,—that it is only by living by them that I ever gained any thing, and I have always found myself a loser just in proportion as I have slighted them."

1st Series. No. 162.

ON

THE NEW BIRTH.

By Rev. FREDERICK T. GRAY.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

January, 1841.

Price 3 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

DISCOURSE.

JOHN, iii, 3.

Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

THIS passage possesses a marked and striking character. It inculcates a great and solemn truth; — a truth, which is of universal interest and application. It deserves, therefore, our most serious and careful attention. Let me then ask of you to listen with candor and patience, as we proceed in its consideration; and may we endeavor to feel and understand the great truth it teaches.

I. The first remark to be made is, that these words were uttered by Jesus in a private conversation by night, with Nicodemus, a Jew. Nicodemus was a man of power and influence among the Jews. He had no doubt heard the discourses, and witnessed some of the miracles of Jesus, and he could not resist the conviction that there was something divine and supernatural in his teaching

and works. He was affected, therefore, with awe and reverence, mingled with a deep curiosity, to understand more fully our Savior's character and pretensions. With this view he seeks him by night, that he might escape the suspicion and persecution of his bigoted and unbelieving brethren. We must remember, however, that the mind of Nicodemus was deeply tinctured with the opinions and prejudices universal among his nation. It is a fact, my friends, which must be always kept in mind, as explaining this and many other parts of the Gospels, that the Jews had formed the most false and erroneous opinions respecting the character and office of the expected Messiah. By a false explanation of some of the obscure and figurative prophecies, they supposed that the Messiah was to appear as a great temporal prince, who, by his wonderful power and warlike skill, was to rescue his nation from slavery; to give them victory over all their enemies, and to raise them to a high military glory. His kingdom they supposed would be of this world. But when Jesus actually appeared, you know that he contradicted and disappointed all the fond hopes of his countrymen. So far from displaying the badges and assuming the office of a monarch, or great general, he came in an humble condition. He was of an obscure family, and claimed no earthly glory; the miracles he performed were those of mercy and compassion to the poor and friendless; and the system he taught was one which required meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, benevolence to men, and piety to God. The only kingdom he designed to set up, was that of holiness, peace, and heavenly-mindedness. It was this strange contrast between their expectations and the reality,

which led the nation to deny the claims of Jesus, to revile him as an impostor and blasphemer, and stubbornly refuse to receive him, as the illustrious prophet, so long expected by the nation.

Nicodemus, it must be observed, sharing in these feelings, comes to Jesus. He had been so far convinced by what he had seen and heard, that Jesus was inspired by God, as finally to say to him, "Rabbi, Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him." The reply of Jesus seems at first view very abrupt and foreign to the subject. To perceive its force and application, we must carefully remember that he was a Jew, and in his answer addressed himself to what he *knew* to be the actual state of mind and feeling of the ruler now before him. Except a man, and even a Jew, be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. By seeing the kingdom of God, is here meant to have a personal interest in it, to share in its benefits and blessings. The phrase "born" was in common use among the Jews in a moral and religious sense. You remember, that by the covenant of Jehovah with this people, they enjoyed peculiar blessings, religious light and knowledge not possessed by any of the heathen nations. Of course they attached a very high importance to their mere birth and descent from Abraham, as making them in a peculiar sense the children of God, and heirs of his favor.

Strangers not belonging to their nation might, according to certain rules, be adopted into their number; and this adoption was described by saying that they were born again, that they had come into the possession of those blessings and distinctions which belonged to Jews, simply

by birth. Jesus here affirms, except the Jew be born again, as strangers are before they become Jews, he cannot share in the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom. It is as necessary for you, Jews, to pass through this change, as it is for proselytes from Heathenism, in order to participate in the privileges of the Jewish covenant.

But this idea, that a Jew must be born again, must be adopted, in order to enter the kingdom of the Messiah, was most strange and revolting to the mind of Nicodemus. He therefore understands the language in its gross literal sense, and objects that a second natural birth was in the nature of things possible. Jesus replies by repeating his assertion in more clear and absolute language, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." That is, except a man be born of water, be baptized, as an outward sign of a new religious profession, and be born in a spiritual sense, he cannot enter the kingdom of the Messiah. You, even you Jews, must be baptized into a new religion, and be *spiritually born*, or, though the children of Abraham, you cannot enter my kingdom. He adds, in illustration, what is born of flesh is flesh. Your mere natural descent as the children of Abraham, gives you no claim to distinction or preference over any other race of mankind. What is born of spirit alone is spiritual. You must acquire a spiritual character and a spiritual frame of mind, before you are fitted for the pure, spiritual, heavenly enjoyments of the gospel. You are not heirs to the kingdom of God, merely by your descent from Abraham. The same truth is taught by St. Paul, Rom. ii, 29, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but

he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the *heart*, in *the spirit*, and not in the letter." So in Phillipians, iii, 3, "For we are the true circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and *rejoice* in Jesus Christ, (not in Moses or Abraham) and have no confidence in the flesh," i. e., in our privileges of birth and descent.

But such views seem to have been too lofty to be understood, and too spiritual, too much at war with his old and rooted prejudices, to be admitted into the mind of Nicodemus. Jesus observes further, marvel not, be not astonished, that I say, you must be born again in a spiritual sense, as if it could be nothing real or intelligible. You know that the wind bloweth where it pleaseth, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit, who has passed through a spiritual birth.

A man becomes thus spiritually renewed by a process as silent, as invisible; by an influence as unseen, as various and unrestrained in its operations, yet as certainly known by its effects, as the force and direction of the wind are perceived by the displays of its power.

So far the language, the thoughts, the opinions, the errors are Jewish. The main purpose of Jesus was to correct a deep rooted and universal error, which Nicodemus held in common with all the nation. It was an opinion formed in the mind of every Jew, from his earliest years, strengthened by the doctrines and rites of the law, and taught as they supposed by their prophets, that by reason of their natural birth, as children of Abraham, they became of course fit subjects for the kingdom of the Messiah. To this persuasion we find constant and per-

petual reference throughout the life and teachings of Jesus.

He declares, that in their views they were wholly mistaken,— their claims unfounded ; and asserts that mere birth, descent from Abraham in itself considered, was worthless — that if they expected to enter the Messiah's kingdom, they must be spiritually renewed, they must be, as it were, born again, in the same sense in which they understood and required that heathens must be born again before they could share in the privileges and blessings of the covenant made by Jehovah with their fathers. They must be baptized as an emblem of their new profession, they must be spiritually born, they must be the subjects of a renewing, enlightening and sanctifying influence.

But here, it may be asked, is the declaration of the text applicable only to Jews? In reply, I say,

II. That to be regenerated or born again, is necessary to all mankind. The kingdom of Christ, or his reign, is the control and possession of his spiritual religion. Whoever would become the subject of that kingdom must have established in his mind and heart the precepts and spirit of the gospel. For if we have not the spirit of Christ we can be none of his. This second birth, is, so to speak, the birth of religion in the soul, a religion requiring pure, spiritual, and devout affections.

Whoever comes to experience this, its true influence, possesses something more and higher than mere natural birth, or than any outward privilege can bestow. Wherever its intended and legitimate effects are seen, there is a new spiritual creation. Every human being, therefore, must have his understanding enlightened, his heart con-

trolled by religion; he must rise to a higher and nobler life than that of the body. He must deny himself and take up his cross; he must bring into subjection his base, sensual, unholy, malignant passions; he must root out every corrupt feeling of the heart; he must acquire and exhibit gentleness, patience, meekness, benevolence, piety, charity. He must love and cultivate every thing which is pure, excellent, holy, and heavenly. He must be renewed in the spirit of his mind; he must enter upon a second, a spiritual life, or he is not, he cannot be fitted for the present and future happiness and glory which Christianity reveals.

Such a change as this is without doubt or question universally necessary. As well may a harvest be gathered from soil on which no rain had descended, no seed been sown, no light and heat dispensed; — as well might the pleasures of learning be obtained by the ignorant — as well may a man become happy without using any of the means for obtaining happiness, as for a man to become a Christian without listening to and obeying the instructions of Jesus.

Regeneration is the process of implanting in the soul, cherishing and carrying forward to perfection, *personal, inward religion;* and as such it is necessary to all, — the Jew, the Christian, and the heathen, — all must be born again in a spiritual sense, must feel the controlling, elevating, sanctifying influences of religion, before they can enter into the kingdom of Christ. Yes, all need this, for in every human being are implanted powers and affections which, if rightly cherished and directed, may, and will enable him, by God's blessing, to form the soul to all goodness. Our existence at first is merely natural and

animal. The spiritual, religious existence must be an after growth. It must be the result of knowledge, culture, reflection, and a sense of obligation. Conscience must be improved and strengthened, the passions regulated, a love of excellence enkindled, and the soul subjected to the control of spiritual truth and motives. Yes, all need to have their souls filled, quickened, purified and sanctified by the spirit and power of religion.

Again, how is this work of becoming truly religious — for this is what the language denotes — how is this process carried on? by what means is it effected? I answer, by the united effort of human and divine agency. In the same way that education is the united work of the preceptor and the scholar. The fruits of the field are in part the result of our labor, assisted by the vegetative power of the earth, the influence of sun and rain, which are the direct effect of divine power. The same language is used in Scripture on the subject of religion.

Salvation is declared to be the gift of God, and he is said "to work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure;" at the same time we are exhorted "to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." God, by his prophet, bids his people "make them a new heart and a new spirit," and yet also says, "a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

The attainment of personal religion, of holiness, is to be effected by our own sorrow for sin, by repentance, and our earnest efforts and holy resolutions, aided by the light and strength conferred by the spirit of God. When we work, when we strive and pray, then we have the assurance that our heavenly Father will give his holy spirit to them that ask him. "Ask and ye shall receive — seek and ye shall find," are the encouraging words given us.

We are taught that the divine spirit has the most intimate connexion with, and constant access to the human soul. That it is at all times and in all places ready to enlighten our darkness, to strengthen our weakness, to instruct us by its providence, to give strength to conscience in answer to our sincere requests; to animate, guide, and assist us, in overcoming temptation, and advancing us in the religious life.

Again, is this change, regeneration, new birth, this becoming a subject of personal religion, a sudden, momentary, or gradual thing? In some cases it may be said to be sudden. A man who has been long careless and insensible, who has pursued a long career of folly and sin, may have his sleeping conscience fearfully roused, his cold heart softened by penitence and remorse; from that precise moment he may be able to date the commencement of his religious life. And perhaps there are some whom you may know who can testify to the truth of this. But, my friends, it is only the commencement. He has only taken the first step. Cheering, animating indeed it is, worthy of rejoicing and gladness in the heart of all, but still it is only the first step. His case is like that of a traveller, who, after a long journey, has found that he has taken the wrong road, that he is among rocks, and torrents, and howling beasts of prey. He must slowly and painfully retrace his steps. So a man earnestly seeking the religious life must make long efforts, must advance by slow and painful degrees, until he in fact becomes religious, until he has contended with and conquered his bad passions, reformed his evil habits, rooted out all which was wrong, and planted in their stead the virtues and graces of the religious character.

The means and manner, however, in which men become religious, are very various. Some have been from infancy brought under the best influences, kept from temptation, brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They have always, from the earliest period to which memory runs back, felt the power of conscience and the restraints of virtue and religion. When in mature life they are regenerated and become religious, they may not be able to fix upon a precise time, the change being gentle and gradual. That the work of acquiring religion must be gradual, is proved by the example of the Apostles and first converts. It is most certain that even after they had become Christians, they did not at once shake off all former passions and habits. And we find in the letters of the Apostles many sharp reproofs, many stern rebukes, many earnest and affectionate warnings, which show that they, though enjoying the ministry of inspired Apostles, were not, at once, made perfect in excellence.

Brethren, he who is earnestly and anxiously seeking to be religious, he who is prayerfully repenting and forsaking every sin, who is implanting and cherishing and carrying forward to perfection all the virtues and graces, that holiness of heart and life which the Gospel requires, is engaged in a great work, and the spirit of God will accompany his efforts. It will be slow and progressive. It is not accomplished in an hour, or a day; it is a work which lasts as long as life. Oh, Christian, forget not that even you can always be growing better than you are at present, more pure, more humble, more devout. You must always be growing in grace and in the knowledge and love of God, in obedience to Christ, in imitation of

his example, and in inward, vital, spiritual excellence piety and holiness.

III. But, finally, how may we be assured that we have passed through this change ourselves — that we have been the subjects of this renewing in the spirit of our minds? — that we are regenerated — have obtained personal religion — have been born again? Whatever terms and phrases we may use, by whatever means we suppose the effect to be produced, the great question, the *vital, essential point is*, how may we be assured that we are religious, are genuine Christians? What is the standard by which we must be tried? These are momentous questions; they are of vital importance to each one of us!

Is it that we are flattering ourselves with the hope that, because we live in a Christian land, and are surrounded by churches, and enjoying weekly Sabbath privileges, that we are truly Christians? Is it that we are deceiving ourselves with the idea, that, because we are found regularly in God's house, and pay a decent regard to religious institutions, or because we observe the outward forms of religion, that we have learned Christ? But do not think that these are the most important of the requirements of Jesus. Let me warn you against thus deceiving yourselves. Many have thought this enough, but they have been mistaken

These are *not* the *highest tests* of true personal religion; they are not the best evidence of a deep love to God, and an interest in the glorious Gospel of the blessed Jesus. If, looking inwardly upon yourselves, you hear an approving answer from conscience, that voice of God within you, to such questions as these, then you may know how far you are religious, how far you are a true disciple of the Savior.

What is the state of my soul now? By what principles am I governed in all my dealings with my fellow-men — by the laws of man or the word of God? What passions do I cherish? What obedience do I render to the will of God? How far do I conform in temper and conduct to the pure and holy Gospel? How far am I humble, prayerful, pious, lovely, like the Savior? How far is he my pattern, and how much do I strive to imitate his example? How far do I endeavor to walk in his steps? When you have honestly and faithfully answered these questions, then you may know, my friends, how far you are disciples of Christ. Look not too much upon external deeds and signs. If you wish to possess personal religion, remember that within you must shine and grow the graces of the Christian character. Trust not too much in mere belief, or outward profession, for the kingdom of heaven is within you, and there only and truly you may find the evidences of a holy spirit.

Brethren, let us be anxiously desirous to possess the peace that comes from *inward personal religion.* Let us look into our hearts, and examine carefully our lives. And be assured, that so far as we have gone with humility, and penitence to the feet of Jesus, so far as we have brought our thoughts, our desires, our affections, our dispositions and conduct under the control of his gospel, so far as we have imbibed his spirit and copied his example, so far are we born again, so far are we regenerated, so far have we acquired personal religion,— but no farther.

Oh, may a sense of our transgression and sinfulness so pervade and overcome our souls, and the glorious hopes and precious promises set before us in the gospel as the Christian's reward, so arouse and animate us, that we may earnestly seek at once to follow *all the commands* of the blessed Jesus, and know the joy and peace of believing.

1st Series. No. 163.

ON PRAYER.

By REV. JOHN H. MORISON.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

FEBRUARY, 1841.

Price 3 *Cents.*

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

ON PRAYER.

THERE is no act, which in word and practice, Jesus has more earnestly enforced than prayer. In connexion with this subject one passage * in his life has been always to my own mind peculiarly affecting. He had been through the day instructing the multitude and healing their sick, confirming his spiritual teachings by his sympathy with their spiritual wants. Having at the close of the day miraculously fed the five thousand, he constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and, dismissing the multitudes, as they were winding their way homeward through the valleys, "he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come he was there alone," and there remained till the first streaks of morning were shooting up over Mount Hermon, and perhaps kindling the snowy peaks of Mount Lebanon. All night long the disciples on the sea below were tossed by the waves, while he, far above, in the serenity of his own spirit, reflecting

* Matthew, xiv.

the clear serenity of the skies, was spending the night in prayer. Faint and exhausted with the toils of the day, he had gone up thither to pour out his soul before his Father, and now refreshed and strengthened, he comes down to allay the storm, and calm the fears of his followers.'

Such is the true character of prayer. From our anxieties and labors, the storms, and doubts, and agitations of life, it leads us up to the mountain of meditation, it spreads around us the clear serenity of the heavens, it reveals to us the first dawnings of that spiritual light which shall afterwards shine upon our daily walks; it purifies, it invigorates the soul; it goes down with us to calm the tempest, to assuage the fears, remove the darkness and doubts, that distress us, to give us strength for all our duties, and to spread its own cheerful spirit round our steps.

Prayer is the intercourse of man with God. It is calling upon our Father in heaven with the certainty that we shall be heard and answered. Not that we expect every request to be literally granted. But as the true child wishes his requests to be modified by the better judgment of his father, so we may wish and expect our prayers to be answered only so far as the divine wisdom may see it to be for our good!

But can we hope that our prayers will have any influence upon the Almighty? Can we expect through prayer to receive that which we might not otherwise obtain? Has the act of devotion any effect except upon our own minds? Here, with many, are the great difficulties connected with the subject. God is unchangeable; — how then can prayer affect him in the distribution of his gifts? God is indeed unchangeable; but man is not; and the result of the in-

tercourse between the two will always vary according to man's conduct. God is unchangeable, not because he acts always in the same way; but because he adheres always to the same principles. He rewards the just; he punishes the unjust; his action in the two cases is different, but the principle the same. If he treated good and bad alike, his immutable conduct would be purchased at the expense of his immutable justice. The whole difficulty rests on this wrong idea of the divine character. God is unchangeable *because he adheres always to the same principles*. In conformity to an unchanging principle he rewards the just and punishes the unjust; and in conformity to an unchanging law he may give to him who asks and withhold from him who asks not.

In his influence upon matter the laws are always the same; but the result is perpetually varying with the circumstances under which they are brought to act. For instance, the laws of vegetation are the same, whatever may be my conduct; but the question whether I am to reap a harvest from their operation depends very much on my causing the seed to be put into the ground. In all the intercourse of God with his free agents the principles are unchangeable, but there are conditions to be performed on our part before we can enjoy the reward. I must sow in order to reap; I must ask in order to receive; and as the connexion between sowing and reaping is a part of the established system of things; — so also is the connexion between asking and receiving. I may not *see* the connexion between prayer and the blessing which follows; neither could a child see the connexion between the seeds that are buried in the naked earth in autumn, and the grain that after a winter of snow waves over the field

in a summer's day; and in truth the exact manner in which the result is brought about is to the profound philosopher, not less than to the child, as much a mystery in the one case as in the other. If he is ignorant of the process by which prayer produces the blessing, so, also, is he ignorant of the process by which the seed produces the plant.

But then we may watch the progress of the seed, as the germ is unfolded and becomes a plant, and can say with certainty that the one is the result of the other. The growth is almost sure. But we pray for a thousand things, only a few are received, and we can trace no connexion between them and the prayers. Are not the cases, where our requests are not answered, sufficient to show that prayer is unavailing, and that the few instances, which seem a fulfilment of our requests, have in reality no dependence upon them? If prayer be effectual, why does it so often fail?

Analogy here does not forsake us. Watch the tree whose light, feathery seeds, uplifted by the winds, are borne hundreds and perhaps thousands of miles, and which in a single year produces enough to plant the forests of a kingdom. Yet that tree is alone, and you nowhere find one which you can say positively is its offspring. There it stands under the eye of heaven, fulfiling its destiny and every year faithful to its Creator, sending forth its myriads of seeds. Some are blighted in the flower, some are mildewed, some fall upon the ocean, some are the food of birds, some are buried in the forest where they lie for centuries till the old forest is removed and the newly admitted warmth calls them into life, and men wonder at the strange growth; some fall by the way-side, some on cultivated fields, some on des-

erts, some in distant islands. For every one that becomes a tree millions on millions are permitted to perish ; and in no case can we trace the connexion between the new tree and the particular seed that produces it. Now are not the innumerable instances of failure a proof, that the process of reproduction is here unavailing, and that the few plants which seem to grow out of these seeds have in reality no dependence upon them? If the process be effectual, why does it so often fail?

God is so rich in his resources that he may select only the few from the innumerable and yet his purposes and their wants be answered. Of the seeds only those shall grow which may not interfere with his other designs, and they shall be enough. And of our requests only those shall be immediately granted, which are not inconsistent with the wants and rights of others and all the complicated purposes of his infinite kingdom. But if we ask in sincerity, they shall be enough. Some of our prayers are blighted by wrong motives, and some are mildewed by an impatient spirit ; — some rest on objects which are barren or would do us harm ; — some must wait till forests of selfishness, ignorance or sin are removed, and centuries yet to come may show to us the fulfilment of petitions over which we had mourned as lost. They may not accomplish the particular purposes for which we had intended them ; but not one prayer is breathed in vain. As of those countless seeds, though few grow into trees, not one is lost; but some are the food of birds, and some go back to enrich the earth, and some are used for the sick, and all in one way or other answer some purpose, though different from their original design ; so of our prayers not one is lost, but each has and shall have its influence in

the great system of God's providence. We read of golden vials in heaven filled with sweet odors which are the prayers of saints.* And we cannot say how many of the prayers which we have regretted as cast upon the winds shall yet greet us with their fragrance in some new condition of being.

But why should we pray? Why has God made this a condition on which we are to receive his favor? He can as well, give without our asking. Why should we sow? Why has God made this a condition of the harvest? He can as well produce food without our labor.

But as our physical powers are to be strengthened by the necessity of providing for their wants through personal exertion, so our spiritual natures are to be called out and cherished by the sort of exertion which God has ordained for them. By connecting prayer with our daily wants he has made it one of the great means of sustaining our spiritual lives.

But I do not like to argue upon a subject like this. Prayer is an instinct, a spontaneous impulse of the soul, and like all other glowing emotions is chilled and withered under the cold investigations of the intellect. There are feelings which it is not well to analyse too rigidly. It is like applying the dissecting knife to our own hearts, to find out the principle of life, which is extinguished by the touch that may reach it. What would become of the filial affections, if the child instead of rushing to his father, as his feelings prompt, should wait till he is able to analyse his feelings; to answer the metaphysical doubts that ingenious men may put; — to see exactly how his mind may

* Rev. v, 8.

act upon his father's mind; and how the wishes of a simple child should have any influence upon the mature purposes of a man? There is more wisdom far in the undoubting impulse by which he clings to his parent, trusts to his kindness and *knows* that he will hear and assist him. Prayer is a spontaneous emotion, a voluntary prompting of the heart. It is the reaching out of the soul towards God, as the young plant reaches out towards the sun; and it is well for us to obey the prompting without being too curious to hear or to answer the objections that may be urged. When once in the simplicity and unthinking confidence of our souls we have felt what it is to pray, we have received that which no arguments can shake. The strength of our own hearts in prayer melt and carry away the objections that before confined us, as the strength of the stream with the first shower of spring breaks up, dissolves and bears away the ice which all winter long has weighed upon its breast, and which no human skill or power could remove.

But for what shall we pray?

I. In the first place we should pray for outward gifts,* and pray for them because they are real blessings, to be received from the hand of God. And besides this we are to pray for them because they are links which, through prayer, shall connect us with him. Personal exertion is the great means of obtaining them. But if it were the only means, leaving us in perfect security, and we received these gifts from the earth without thought or acknowledgment, their highest meaning would be lost; and we should entirely forget him from whom they come. But

* Matthew vi, 7; "Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew xxvi, 39; "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

now, while personal exertion and our own wisdom are the principal means of obtaining what we desire here, still so much of uncertainty rests upon all earthly schemes, that we can never feel entirely secure in ourselves, but are prompted to reach out for a wisdom and a strength higher than our own. I have sometimes felt as if these things were too small and momentary to be an object of prayer, — that it was beneath the Almighty to supply us with our daily bread, and the comforts of life, when he has already so far furnished us with the means of supplying ourselves. And if the prayer and the divine interference ended with the gift it might be so. But it does not. While I pray for some earthly good as an *end* in itself, through prayer it is converted into a *means* (beyond my thought) of spiritual improvement.

It is thus through all the works of God that small means accomplish high ends. The flower whose fragrance scents the whole air round our dwellings, comes out from the mouldering earth. The affections of brother and sister, husband and wife, with all that is true and disinterested in their character, are cherished by offices, which but for the feeling with which they are connected, would not bear to be too narrowly inspected. The friend, by watching our little transient wants, by gratifying our taste and senses in matters too slight to be noticed by any but the eye of friendship, awakens the purest and most delicate feelings of the heart. So prayer for temporal things, by connecting God with all our transient feelings, wants, blessings, and hopes, kindles within us purer desires, brings before us nobler wants and a yearning for higher blessings. In fear and sorrow, amid earthly doubts, I pray to God for help, and in feeling that

he has heard my prayer my affections are drawn out towards him.

A child entirely selfish, cares for nothing but its own gratification. It seeks others as the means of self-indulgence, and if they, through fear of encouraging its selfishness, should refuse to grant its requests, they would only do the injury they feared. But where the mother prudently gratifies its wishes, she gradually, through its inferior appetites, engages its affections, till they become stronger than its selfish desires, and it will gradually resign them, in order to please and assist her. Thus it is that God deals with us by connecting himself in prayer with all our earthly wishes, plans and thoughts. At first we seek him only in reference to them. Our pecuniary prospect, for example, looks dark. We are perplexed and know not which way to turn. No human wisdom can give us the light we want. In our embarrassments we look up to heaven, and ask that the impending ruin may be turned aside. The object of our prayer is worldly, but it has called out a new feeling, and if the habit of sincere and fervent prayer even for such things be formed, our affections will gradually rise from them, and fix themselves on something more true and unchanging.

But if God interfered only with our spiritual wants, and made them alone the object of prayer, the great incentives to devotion with those who are in the infancy of their spiritual being would be cut off, and the higher affections would have no opportunity to come out. All that such men most love and value would be thrown out of their devotions. But now every thing comes in to quicken the prayerful spirit. The father looks upon his children and revolves in his mind, as a man of the world, the various

dangers to which they are exposed. Their circumstances, — who can tell what reverses of fortune shall pass over them while they live? Their health; — who can say how soon disease shall come among them, and one after another sicken and die? Their characters;—he shudders as he thinks of the evil influences that are round them; and of the many, who, starting with hopes as bright as theirs, have gone down early to the grave with shame and sadness. And as he thinks on the many ills against which no human skill or foresight can provide, he calls them nearer to himself, and with a trembling heart asks that God will watch over their inexperience and protect their weakness. As he prays, the affections which bind him to them bind him also to his Father. And when these little ones become men and women, and are scattered through distant lands, the memory of their early home, consecrated by a father's prayers, holds them back in the moment of temptation; and in the hour of loneliness and sorrow, those same affections, linked in with all they love on earth, uniting them to each other and to God, quicken their faith, and breathe in consolation and hope. Thus through prayer our earthly attachments lead to a higher improvement. The mother over her sick child prays with the agony of a mother's heart, that its life may be spared; and while she pleads with God with the intense feelings with which she would plead with man to spare its life, God, for the first time becomes to her a real existence; she feels that he is with her as a father, that there is not the dreadful gulf she had feared between the living and the dead; — insensibly her terror is removed, before her prayer is ended she can add, "not my will but thine be done," and, as she turns back to witness its sufferings,

she is almost ready to give up her child to its Father in heaven. Thus through prayer our earthly affections become the parents of a spiritual life. As what seems but the ugly casing of a worm has been nourishing, and already contains, the perfect lineaments of the beautiful creature that shall soon burst forth, so our earthly affections may give life to a purer principle within, and already through them this corruptible has put on incorruption, this mortal has put on immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory.

We are then to pray for outward, temporal gifts. We are gratefully to receive and earnestly to ask for them; for they are blessings from the hand of God, and by receiving them as such we are fostering within ourselves feelings purer and more lasting than themselves. If we pray in sincerity and truth we shall be heard.* But they are always of doubtful influence; and we know not but that what seems to us bread or a fish, may in reality prove a stone or a serpent. I fear not to pray for spiritual attainments — for virtue, faith, charity — for I know that they are sure. But in asking for transient blessings, and especially for any particular object of interest or passionate desire, though it be a good name, health, a competent support, or even the life of a friend, I ask with trembling; I dare not pray for them except with the condition earnestly expressed that it should be consistent with our highest spiritual good.

II. While we pray for the gifts of this life, the desire of spiritual improvement which might otherwise be chilled or stifled is brought out, and the stronger it becomes the

* Matthew vii, 7. "Ask and it shall be given you."

more earnest will be our prayers for spiritual attainments. Here is the great field for devotion. It then becomes not merely the cry of a weak and erring creature, cast down by the misfortunes of life, combating with its evils and reaching forward to its possessions; but of a sinful creature praying that his sins may be forgiven, of an ignorant being praying that light may shine upon his steps, that the path of duty may become plain, and strength be given to enable him to walk therein. Not more earnestly does the father or mother pray for the life and safety of their children in the hour of peril than he for the life and salvation of his soul. And the simple act of prayer, though it is not all, will of itself strengthen our faith and purify our hearts. The feeling that we are in the presence of God must hush all sinful thoughts. We are assimilated to the superior minds with whom we associate. While with them we feel ourselves in a different atmosphere. We drink in a purer spirit, and leave them feeling that virtue has come out from them, and that we have been made wiser and better. There are those whose countenance and tones even awaken within us a purer life. We cannot be with them without feeling gently rebuked and excited by their example, by the quickening influence of their thoughts, the calm enthusiasm of their faith. But what are all human companionships compared with that of the divine mind? None enters so deeply into the heart, or infuses into our very nature such breathings of holiness and love. By prayer, in the stillness of all worldly thoughts, I am admitted into the presence of God. Around me is the infinite majesty of the most high — a purity before which the heavens shrink back as unclean, — a wisdom before which the highest wisdom of angels is but

folly, — a love which looks with tender mercy on the lowest and most sinful of his creatures. I cannot stand in such a presence, and hold intercourse with a being like this, without feeling my nature quickened, elevated and enlarged. Higher conceptions of truth and holiness open before me; I am drawn forward by stronger and more hallowed desires, which utter themselves in prayer. And, again, with new attainments, new conceptions of truth spring up, and before them always is a reaching out of the soul for something higher than has yet been realized or conceived. Thus prayer rises with us stronger and stronger, from the first feeble sigh of penitence to the highest conceptions we may reach of spiritual greatness. Our ideas of God open out broader and more pure, and as the astronomer who first employed the telescope, looked farther into the depths of heaven, and found there myriads of stars, whose light had before fallen upon no human eye, so with our spiritual discernment improved by faith and prayer, we look farther into the deep things of the mystery of God, and behold there new visions of beauty, truth and holiness, which we long to realize in our lives. Before them the objects of human ambition — the hopes, the fears, the sorrows and the joys of life — dwindle away like this little earth amid the infinite universe of worlds.

I have spoken only of the natural influence of the act of praying upon ourselves. But God will assist us with his spirit, purifying and strengthening our minds, quickening our hearts, unfolding to us more and more of his own perfections, and raising us to a nearer communion with himself.*

* This union of the soul with God, as at once the highest act and

III. I have spoken of prayer as a means in the pursuit of temporal and spiritual attainments. I have now to speak of it, or rather of its spirit, in a yet higher character; — as an end, as being in itself the loftiest reward and attainment which the immortal soul can reach. The union of friends is in itself a great pleasure; the intercourse with nature — with field and grove, and evening skies — brings to us a true and sublime enjoyment. We ask not what it brings to us; — it is in itself more than all that it can bring. We are not like children who long for the annual visits of their relatives because of the presents they expect. The friend himself is more than all gifts; — the intercourse with nature richer than tropical fruits, and itself the source of a higher happiness. But richer than the intercourse of friend with friend, or the soul with this outward universe in all its magnificence and beauty, is the intercourse of the soul with God — the union of our finite natures with his infinite spirit. There may be no interference of visual organs, no voice or sound; but the blending of spirit with spirit. Emotions too nice or too deep for human language — the trembling thought, which fears to utter itself in words — the inward

purpose of prayer, is nowhere expressly mentioned by Jesus in reference to this subject, yet how beautifully does its spirit pervade his life! "I and my Father are one. * * Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." John x, 30; xvii, 20, 21.

The delight of prayer as an end is more dwelt upon in the Psalms, than elsewhere, and has entered more into the character of eastern than of western nations. In them it has sometimes been excessive, but never among us.

sigh, which dares not vent itself aloud — are recognised and answered by the immediate communion of spirit with spirit.

And this immediate, entire communion is a want of the soul from its earliest to its latest impulse; and to this it looks forward as its highest bliss. The affections, called out by earthly objects, and investing them with ideal perfections, were not born to be forever the sport of mortal accident and weakness, reaching out for a happiness they cannot find; but in God alone shall all their hopes and yearnings be realized.

With the birth of every great feeling we long for communion with Him. When in childhood we first awaken to a consciousness of beauty, and the coming of spring almost overpowers us with gladness, as we stray through the fields alone, it is not merely what we see that affects us; but we are awed as it were by an invisible presence, moving over the earth and calling shrubs, birds and flowers from their secret graves. Our souls long even then to commune with the great spirit. And the desire grows with our minds and comes out through every strong emotion. It is only they that never rise to any high enthusiasm who do not feel it. When we are deeply moved, no intercourse with man can fill up our wants, and we crave something which may respond to us more than nature,— something which from the field, the ocean and the sky, may understand us and speak to us with tones of kindness. In short, we need the intercourse with our Father which can be known only in prayer. Without this we are as children, left alone in some great mansion, and supplied with their daily food by an invisible hand. They walk through the long halls and deserted chambers; and in the fearful silence start at the hollow reverberations of

their own steps. They take up and lay aside their toys; they taste, and turn away in sickness from their food. Darkness is frightful, the day comes not cheerfully as it once did; but they are weighed down and oppressed by a sense of loneliness and awe. Not till their parents have come back, and they can run to them and feel the security of their presence, can they really enjoy their food, their sports, or the most common pleasures. So in this great mansion where our Father has placed us, as we stand and muse in its midst its greatness weighs us down with a sense of loneliness and awe. Not till we feel that it is all animated by the presence of God, — that he is with us as a Father with his children, — can we seem to ourselves otherwise than orphans amid his mighty works. Till then we enjoy not, as we should, each other's society, — we love not man with the love which is due to a human soul, and see not in nature the beauty which it is intended to reveal. Our highest feelings are without an object, and wander like the dove over a deluged world, lonely, restless and sad.

I have read, in the works of an atheist,* of one, "whose young enthusiasm, casting off the belief in God, sought for happiness in man, in nature and his own soul. But soon he leaves "his cold fireside and alienated home," where the flames of devotion had never glowed, "to seek strange truths in undiscovered lands;"

"Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fed not his thirsting lips; and all of great
Or good or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew."

* Shelley's Alastor.

He exercises his benevolent feelings. He goes through the fairest and sublimest works of nature, and looks with love on all that he beholds. The world to him is hollow and void; for he is without a father and without a home.

> "Thou," he exclaims, "thou hast a home,
> Beautiful bird: Thou voyagest to thine home,
> Where thy sweet mate will welcome thy return.
> And what am I, that I should linger here,
> With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
> Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
> To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
> In the deaf air, to the blind earth and heaven
> That echoes not my thoughts?"

"A gloomy smile of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips." Such is the sense of loneliness and despair that must overshadow the young, warm, affectionate heart, which feels that the universe is forsaken, and itself cut off from all intercourse with its Father in heaven. Without this the earth is a cold and naked waste. But the spirit of prayer rising upon the soul like the sun on a benighted world, fills with beauty, health, and strength, its pale and trembling affections.

So needful to our peace is that intercourse with God, which can be known only in prayer. And we shall need and enjoy it more as our spirits are purified and raised. The multitudes who partook of the loaves and fishes went to their homes, and the disciples, who had not yet realized this higher life embarked upon the sea; but Jesus went up into the mountain to pray; and while they slept or were tossed by the waves, he continued all night long in prayer.

I have spoken of prayer in reference to outward gifts, to spiritual attainments, and that sympathy which the soul craves and finds in God alone. It is not a formal wor-

ship. It may or it may not come out in speech. It is a frame of mind rather than a stated act. The deepest devotion must be in the silence of our own hearts. But the outward formal office of prayer is also needed to quicken the inward feeling and remind us of God, when so many cares and duties and pleasures are absorbing our thoughts.

I had intended to add something on the seasons which should be set apart as peculiarly fitted for prayer. The morning — when we awake with minds and bodies refreshed by the slumbers of the night. The day is before us with its uncertainties, duties and temptations. And before we have been touched by them, in the freshness of our waking thoughts, shall we not thank God for the goodness that has preserved us through the night, and ask that the same watchful care may be extended through the day. Again, at evening when the labors of the day are ended, and the stillness of night is round us, and we are about to resign ourselves to the mysterious condition of sleep, shall we not once more with thankfulness and prayer commend ourselves and those we love to our Father in heaven.

Shall not families with one heart and voice recognise the presence and ask the blessing of Him through whom they are? And at all seasons of unusual sorrow or gladness — when great and important steps are to be taken, or great and important events have occurred — shall we not, in the fulness of our hearts, from joy or doubt, or sadness, throw ourselves upon our Father in heaven, gratefully to acknowledge his goodness, to ask his guidance and his kind and merciful support?

So may we live as he would have us live, and cultivate those habits of communion with him which all the events of life shall strengthen and death itself confirm.

1st Series. No. 164.

REASONS OFFERED

BY

SAMUEL EDDY, LL. D.

LATE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF R. ISLAND.

FOR HIS OPINIONS

TO THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN PROVIDENCE, FROM WHICH HE WAS COMPELLED TO WITHDRAW

FOR HETERODOXY.

SIXTH EDITION.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

MARCH, 1841.

Price 4 Cents.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAVE two reasons for presenting this to the public. First, to refute the unfounded reports which are circulated respecting my opinions; in some instances, it is to be feared, from improper motives. Second, the hope that it may fall into the hands of some, who have hitherto paid but little attention to the subject, and who, by the perusal of this sketch, may be induced to give the subject a candid examination; in doing which they will see on how slender a foundation rest the various creeds and systems of faith imposed by men, and which have been productive of effects as opposite to the proper fruits of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as strife and contention are to righteousness, and peace and charity.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

REASONS, &c.

At a meeting of the committee of the Church, on the evening of Tuesday, March 31, 1818, after some conversation on the subject discussed in the following pages, it was said that it would be necessary for me to state my views to the church, at the next meeting. This was agreed to be done in writing. And at the meeting on the Thursday evening following, after some objections, the following paper was read and left with the clerk.

As I am this evening called in question respecting my faith in God and Christ; in order that there may be no misapprehension, or misrepresentation; and especially, (in view of the most unfavorable result of this case, as it respects myself,) should it hereafter be said, that I had "denied the faith" and "the Lord that bought me," that I might be enabled, and my children after me, by irrefragable evidence, to rebut and put to silence such unfounded report, I have drawn up and subscribed this, my confession of faith, on this subject: Protesting, at the same time, against the right of the church to exercise any discipline against me, after this, my declaration of faith.

I believe that "there is but one God, the FATHER, of whom are all things:" 1 Cor. viii. 6. "That there is none other God but one:" 1 Cor. viii. 4. That the FATHER is "the only true God:" John xvii. 3. That He "is a Spirit:" John iv. 24. That he is the "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all:" Eph. iv. 6. That he is "God only wise:" Rom. xvi. 27. And "the only Lord God:" Jude iv. That he is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God:" 1 Tim. i. 17.—"The only Potentate," and "who *only* hath immortality:" 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. That "there is none other God but He:" Mark xii. 29, 34. That He is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ:" Eph. i. 17; Heb. i. 9. And "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:" Eph. i. 3.

I believe that He "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:" Acts iv. 24. That "He giveth to all *life*, and *breath*, and *all* things," and that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being:" Acts xvii. 25, 28. And that HE created all things *alone by himself*, by his *own hands*, and that there is no God with him: Isaiah xiv. 24; xlv. 12; Deut. xxxii. 39; Mark xiii. 19.

I believe "that Jesus is the Christ:" 1 John v. 1. That he was born of "Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph:" Mat. i. 18; Luke ii. 5, 6. I "confess and believe that he is the Son of God:" 1 John iv. 15; Acts viii. 37. I believe that he is "the beginning of the creation of God;" Rev. iii. 14. "The only begotten of the Father;" John i. 44. "The first born of every creature:" Col. i. 15.—And "the first begotten and the first born from the dead:" Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5.

I believe that "God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows:" Heb. i. 9. That "God gave not the Spirit by measure to him:" John iii. 34. That "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:" Col. i. 19. That "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" Col. ii. 9. That "he is the image of the invisible God:" Col. i. 15. And "the brightness of his glory;" Heb. i. 3.

I believe that he "came down from heaven not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him:" John vi. 38. That he came "to bear witness unto the truth:" John xviii. 37. That "the Father, which sent him, gave him commandment what he should *say*, and what he should *speak*:" John xii. 49. I believe that he *said*, "My Father is greater than I:" John xiv. 28. "My Father is greater than all:" John x. 29. "I can of my own self do nothing:" John v. 30. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works:" John xiv. 10. I believe that when he spake these words he spake the *truth*, for I believe that he "did no sin, neither was *guile* found in his mouth:" 1 Pet. ii. 22. I believe that "he and his Father are one;" John x. 30. Not one person, however, or being, but as all true disciples are one in the Father, and in him: John xvii. 21, 22; xiv. 20.

I believe "in my heart that God hath raised him from the dead:" Rom. x. 9. That "all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth:" Matt. xxviii. 18. That because "he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is

Lord, to the glory of God the Father:" Phil. ii. 8—11; Heb. ii. 9. That "God hath made him both Lord and Christ:" Acts ii. 36. That "he hath exalted him to be a prince and Savior:" Acts v. 31. That "God gave him to be head over all things to the church:" Eph. i. 22. That "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained," that is, Jesus Christ: Acts xvii. 31; Rom. ii. 16. That he "is the way, and the truth, and the life:" John xiv. 6. And that "there is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved:" Acts iv. 12.

I believe also that "there is one God, and one Mediator between *God* and *men*, the *man* Christ Jesus:" 1 Tim. ii. 5. That "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead: 1 Cor. xv. 21. That "through this *man* is preached the forgiveness of sins:" Acts xiii. 38. That "at the coming of Christ, then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." "Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all:" 1 Cor. xv. 23, 28. And I deny that I have asserted or maintained, within the last six months, in any way whatever, any opinion contrary to what is contained in this confession.

This is my present faith on this subject, the result of diligent, prayerful, and laborious search after truth. But, agreeably to the principle of this church, and the command to search the Scriptures, given by him who was not only full of grace and *truth*, but the *way* and the *truth*, I hold myself bound at all times to be open to conviction, and to the reception of *truth*, as the same shall be presented to my mind.

I add further, that duty to myself, to the cause of truth and christian liberty, and especially to the memory of those venerable men who established this, the most ancient Baptist church in America, into which they admitted no creed but the holy Scriptures, leaving every man to his own judgment, compels me to protest, and I do hereby protest against, and utterly deny, the right of this church, by the laws of Jesus Christ, or the principles on which this church was founded, to discipline any member, on account of his faith in relation to this subject, who will make the confession which I here make. I caution you, my brethren, not to be wise "above that which is written:" you, especially, because this church has never acknowledged any rule, other than the Scriptures of truth. I warn you against a denial, by your treatment of me, of the truth of these declarations of inspiration: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God:" 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God:" 1 John iv. 15. I caution you to take heed to the words of Paul: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth:" Rom. xiv. 4,—lest the reproach fall on *you*, which fell on him who said, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou:" Isaiah lxv. 5. Once more I caution you, my brethren, not to be influenced by the backbitings and misrepresentations of ignorant and malevolent talebearers, who neither know, nor care to know, by any investigation of truth, the merits of this question; and with me to remember, that we shall all "stand before the judgment-seat of Christ."

April 2, 1818. SAMUEL EDDY.

This did not give satisfaction. The subject was at length postponed to the next monthly meeting, and in the interim, the following remarks were penned, though not read until the fifth of June. They were not attempted to be answered, nor was any notice taken of them.

BRETHREN:

The same reasons which induced me, at the last meeting, to state in writing, my faith respecting God and Christ, have also induced me to commit to writing what further I have to say on the subject before you.

Two questions, only, present themselves for your consideration. First, whether, in the *opinion of the church my* opinions be scriptural or not. Second, if not, whether, for that cause *only*, the church can, by the laws of Jesus Christ, or the principles on which this church was founded, discipline me. It is to be remembered, that for my opinions *only* am I called in question.

Duty to myself, and to you, require that I should state the origin of my doubts respecting the commonly received doctrine of the trinity, and the course of investigation pursued by me. But before I state this, permit me to say, that to my great surprise, my opinions are represented by many as indicating a state of mind, altogether indifferent as to my future welfare, and even as betokening doubts of a future state of rewards and punishments; a state rendered *certain*, in the opinion of some of the best and most learned men, from the very light of nature, independent of all revelation. Brethren, can you believe that life, eternal life, has all at once become of no value to me? And that for no other reason than to be exposed to hatred, calumny, and reproach, I have voluntarily departed from Him, who

is the way, and the truth, and the life? Do you think that my mind has become callous to the solemnities of judgment, and the joys of salvation? Can you believe that I have willingly, and without a cause, incurred the loss, not only of Christian fellowship, but private friendship? That I have at once become insensible to all that is most dear to man, either in time or eternity? You must either believe this, or you must do me the justice to acknowledge, that my opinions are the result of careful investigation, and avowed under a serious sense of duty, and a full persuasion of future responsibility.

The common doctrine of the trinity was received by me, as it is by most others, without examination. I had, as you probably have, taken it for granted without investigation, to be the truth of revelation; and for a time, that faith in it was necessary to constitute the character of a Christian. I am happy however in saying, that this was but a *short* time. And so strong was my prejudice on this subject, that notwithstanding the contrary faith was frequently a subject of conversation, I never once gave *that* side of the question any attention. As far as I can recollect, false arguments, seriously adduced in proof of the underived power, and proper deity of Christ, first turned my mind to a consideration of this subject. As I read the scriptures, passages presented themselves in a light in which I had never before viewed them, and my doubts increased. As I had read nothing against the received doctrine, I was determined to satisfy my mind from the only correct source of information. Whatever the true doctrine might be, I was persuaded that it must appear in the New Testament. To that I therefore had recourse. And that I might have the whole evidence on the subject

before me at once, as far as possible, I transcribed every word, from the beginning of Matthew to the end of Revelation, which appeared to me to bear on the question. The result was a full conviction, that the Father was the only true God, and that Christ was not the Father, or that being whom Christ asserts to be the only true God.

I now solicit your attention to the question, Whether by the laws of Jesus Christ, or the principles on which this church was founded, my opinions render me a subject of church discipline.

In the first place I assert, that no example can be produced from the New Testament, for disciplining a member for entertaining erroneous opinions. Neither is there any precept which will warrant such discipline against one, who acknowledges Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. All the cases recorded are for criminal conduct, not opinions. The scriptural meaning of schism and heresy, have been too often explained to render it necessary for me to prove at this time, that mere opinions constitute no part of the offences expressed by these words. It is *conduct*, not *faith*, right or wrong, that makes men heretics and schismatics. A leader of a party, a wilful sower of discord in a church, is a heretic, however orthodox his opinions may be. But what party have I formed? To whom, or against whom, have I set myself up as a leader? Into whose mind have I instilled, or endeavored to instil, my own sentiments? What book have I recommended? to whom have I recommended any book, on the subject before you? On these questions I challenge investigation. And let those who are most forward in the charge of criminality on *this* ground, take care that while they *accuse* me, they *condemn* not themselves. To be the *occasion* of contention, is no

evidence of criminality; for of this a man may be the *innocent* occasion. Indeed of this, Christ himself, and all the apostles, were the innocent occasion. If my *opinions* have occasioned discord in this church, they who have *made* the discord, and not my opinions, are chargeable with this. I have no contention with any man. For my opinions I am ready to answer, and to shew that for them you have no authority over me.

To whose example shall we look, or to whose can we look, as a rule of Christian fellowship, better than to that of Christ and the apostles? What was the conduct of the former, and with whom did he associate in worship? With those only, who invoke Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and who acknowledge three persons in one God, and each of these persons very God? Certainly not, for no such worshippers were then to be found on the face of the earth. But he constantly united with those who worshipped the one living and true God, the God of Israel. This he did in the synagogues, taking an active part. This was his *custom*. But it may be said, Jesus was a Jew, a minister of the circumcission, made under the law and came to fulfil it. Be it so. But he was a worshipper of the *one* living and *true* God; not in *two* or *three* persons, but one; and had fellowship with those who worshipped this one living and true God. And *his* steps *we* are commanded to follow. But it may be replied, the christian dispensation was not then fully commenced; the apostles had not *then* received their commission, nor been indued with power from on high. Let us then examine their conduct, and see, if on this subject, it differed from that of their master. And with whom were they in the practice of uniting in worship? With the

Jews, as constantly as their Master, with both Sadducees and Pharisees, in the temple and in the synagogues. It may be said, they were not there to worship, but to preach the gospel. This however is not the truth of fact. What said Jesus, foretelling their persecutions? "They (the Jews) *shall put you out of* (that is, exclude you from) the synagogues." And would *that* have been persecution, had it been unlawful to enter *in* and worship with the Jews? On the principles I am opposing, he ought to have said, Go not into the synagogues, nor have fellowship with those who worship in them, for they are *all* (and in *this* he would have said truly) antitrinitarians, and deniers of my deity. And what said Paul to the Jews of Ephesus? "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh at Jerusalem." What said he in his defence before Felix?—"There are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to *worship*," in the temple; whither went Peter and John "at the hour of prayer," and whither, in Solomon's porch, the apostles and brethren resorted to worship: the same temple in which Paul, in the very act of worship, was seized as a *heretic*.

But it may be said, these precedents come not up to the case before us, and that the question now is, whether, in a christian church, we are to have fellowship with those whose opinions, in *our* opinion, are unscriptural. This would, in fact, be making the question, whether we are to be wiser than the apostles, more sagacious than they in detecting, and more scrupulous in rejecting, *unfitness* for christian fellowship. Those who maintain the affirmative, would have no fellowship with those who deny the position that there are three persons in one God, and each of these persons very God; a position nowhere laid down in the

Bible, and which cannot be stated with the slightest color of probability, in the words of holy writ. But would such have fellowship with those who deny the resurrection of the dead? with those who have not the knowledge of God? Yet, in "the church of God at Corinth," among those "called to be saints," of whom Paul says, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God," we are sure, from the words of Paul, were persons destitute of this faith, and of this knowledge. And what directions did Paul give in this case? Did he say, cast them out? deliver them over to the buffetings of Satan? No. Paul said no such thing. *He* had not so learnt Christ. But he said, when he declared to them their errors, "I speak this to your shame." "Awake to righteousness and sin not."

The fair inference from these facts is, that Christ and his apostles had fellowship in worship with all who worshipped the one living and true God. And we have the evidence of precept and example, that the only requisite for admission into the church was, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; or, in other words, confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

That a uniformity of faith should be required, or supposed possible to exist, in a church, is repugnant to reason as well as scripture. To understand the various and conflicting opinions of Christians, require much reading and reflection, as well as powers of discrimination. These all have not. The means of information are not within the reach of all, and of those who have the means, all are not endowed with the same capacities for investigation, nor with the same love of truth, nor with equal

diligence in the pursuit of it. In all these respects men differ. And the inevitable consequence is, a difference of opinion. A whole church may *declare* their faith in certain articles, or propositions, and thus may be *said* to be of one faith. But the question is, after all, do they all *believe* the same *truths*, or hold the same opinions for truths? It is probable that nearly all of this church, if asked, do you believe in the doctrine of the trinity? would answer yes. But if asked, separately and apart, what do you *mean* by the *trinity?* no two would give the same answer, nor would any two understand the same supposed truths by the word trinity. How then could they be said to be of *one faith* on this subject? What greater burlesque upon seriousness and truth can be imagined, than to ask a black, who knows not his letters, or any other person, equally uninformed, on presenting himself to a church for admission, whether he believes in "a trinity in unity," or a "triune God," as some call it, or original sin, and the other of the five points of Calvinism, as they are usually termed? And yet this burlesque is actually cast on seriousness and truth, by all those who require members, on admission into a church, to subscribe certain articles of faith. Such members may assent to the articles, and profess to believe them, but do they believe the *truths* which the articles are supposed to *express?* Certainly no more than though they were expressed in Latin or Greek, unless they understand the meaning of the words contained in these articles. I am happy to learn, however, that many of our churches have become ashamed of their articles, and prudently keep them out of sight. To the honor of the founders of this church, and to the founders of every Baptist church in this State, un-

tinctured with the peculiarities of the Genevan apostle, they, as far as I can learn, cast no such contempt on seriousness and common sense. Not one of them had any covenant or articles, other than the Scriptures. They knew that men must, and would, and had a right to differ in opinion, and that though, at one time, they might all agree, it was no pledge for future agreement. This difference of opinion has existed, and now exists, in the members of this church, and that without any breach of charity, on points of as much importance, in the opinion of many, as those now in question. To suppose a constant uniformity of sentiment in a church, is to suppose that each member is miraculously and instantaneously brought to the knowledge of the whole truth, and that forever thereafter they are to remain stationary, as to all improvement. I cannot sufficiently express my contempt for him who has the means of information within his reach, and yet neither hopes, nor desires, nor uses the means, to know more to-morrow than he knew yesterday. Such may well be content with articles, and shackles, and handcuffs. They are out of all danger of being convinced to-morrow, that they were in an error yesterday. Others, however, know that an increase of knowledge renders it *possible*, at least, to produce a conviction of error in past opinions. They know it from experience, as well as the dictates of reason. They know, also, that the commission given by Christ to the apostles to preach the gospel, supposes an increase of knowledge after conversion, and a capacity in the teacher to communicate that knowledge. The order of the commission is, to convert, baptize, and teach. To the reproach of many teachers and churches, this order is completely inverted.

With *them* it says, make converts, teach them the creed, and if they say it right, then baptize and receive them into the church; otherwise not. But this is not the wisdom of Jesus, but the perversion of his authority.

The reasoning here laid down is fully confirmed by the apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Romans and Philippians. In the former, especially, when he says, "Who art thou that judgest another man's (Christ's) servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." Fairly implying, that he who has *confessed* Christ, and thereby become his *servant*, is answerable at no other tribunal, unless he revolt from the *service* of his master. Also when he says, "the kingdom (or reign) of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in *these* things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men." What confidence in their own knowledge and holiness must they have, who will reject him who is *acceptable to God* and approved of men? Be it remembered, that it is not here said, he that believeth this creed, or that creed, but he that *serveth Christ*. And until it be shown that those of my opinion cannot *serve Christ*, I ask by what authority will you reject that precept of Paul, which says, "receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God?" The same writer informs us that "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the *keeping of the commandments of God*." I have not yet been told that I am less capable of this service than my brethren.

I will now endeavor to show that, however unscriptural my opinions may be, in the view of this church, they are such as an honest man may entertain, without the charge of ignorance or irreligion: and that, so far from demanding immediate condemnation, they merit a candid and

serious examination. First, however, as the present difficulty commenced with my objecting to the signing of Watts's doxologies to the trinity, permit me to make a few remarks on that subject. It has been the boast of this church, that it admits of no other creed but the Scriptures; that it adopts no practice not warranted by apostolic example or authority. The language of our pastor has been, "unless you can produce a *thus saith the Lord*, for your practice, reject it." In vain have I inquired for precept or precedent, for signing a doxology to the trinity. None such is pretended. Whether there be a trinity or not, it must be admitted that we have no more authority for the practice, than for any of those in use in the church of Rome More than this, it is admitted that there is no authority (unless the Council of Constantinople and the formularies of ecclesiastics be an authority) for offering prayer, praise, or thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit, either as a distinct person, or in union with the other supposed persons of the trinity. But the evidence in this case is not all of a negative character. We have two positive precepts, giving explicit directions in this case, and in direct opposition to the practice of this church, and of every other church which is in the practice of singing doxologies to the trinity. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul thus expresses himself: "Be filled with the spirit; speaking to yourselves in *psalms* and *hymns* and *spiritual* songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks *always* and for *all things*, unto *God* and the *Father*, in the *name* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is a *rule* for the direction of Christians in giving praise to God. It is to God the *Father*, in the *name* of Jesus Christ. Not, as is our practice, to the Fa-

ther, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the name of nobody. The same precept is given in relation to the same subject, in nearly the same words, in the Epistle to the Colossians. Also in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Indeed, a precept in conformity with our practice, must, I think, appear strange to an unprejudiced reader of the Bible. Did God select the Jews, as a people, to preserve the *knowledge* of the *one* true God, and does this *one* true God consist of *three* persons, one of whom is called the Holy Ghost, and did he never explicitly reveal this truth to them? Did he commission Jesus Christ "to bear witness to the *truth*," to "bring life and *immortality* to light," and has he declared that this life, *eternal life*, consists in the *knowledge* of the *Father*, the *only* true God, and *himself;* and is there a person in the Godhead called the Holy Ghost, who forms an essential part of the deity, equal with the Father in all respects, and has Christ given us no intimation of this? And if he has not, and this doctrine be true, has he not failed in the execution of his commission? Indeed, if it be true, has he not *denied* the truth by asserting that the Father, called by trinitarians the first person in the trinity, is the only true God?

That neither Christ nor his forerunner taught this doctrine, is inferable from other considerations. The case of the twelve baptized by Paul at Ephesus, proves that *they* had heard no such doctrine. Yet they were *disciples*, *believers in Jesus;* but when questioned whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed, they declared that they had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost. Is it possible that this could have been the case, had they been taught that there was a person in the Godhead called the Holy Ghost, equal with the Father,

and equally with him an object of worship, of praise and thanksgiving? John told his disciples when *he* baptized them that *he* baptized them *in water*, but that he that should come after him, would baptize them *in the Holy Ghost*. That this did not imply a *person* called the Holy Ghost, is manifest from the case of these twelve. Further, what Jew would have been baptized into the belief of a *triune* God? Such, they had not been taught to be the God of their Fathers.

That this doctrine was not taught by the apostles, is further evident from the declaration of Paul before Felix. "After the way which they call heresy, so worship I *the God of my Fathers.*" And from the charge of the Jews against him before Gallio, that he persuaded men to "*worship God*, contrary to the law." Not that he worshipped any but *him* whom *they* considered the true God. Nowhere is he, or the other apostles, or Christ or the disciples, charged with worshipping the Holy Ghost, or any other than him whom the Jews believed to be the true God. But when have the Jews acknowledged a *triune* God, or a *dual* God, or a person, or subsistence, or being called the Holy Ghost, as an object of worship or praise?

On the whole, it is to me most evident, that all praises offered to God, as a trinity of persons, is not only not warranted by scripture, but is a direct violation of positive precept, and what no Jew would have submitted to, and what neither Christ nor the apostles could, with safety to themselves, have either taught or practiced.

Let it not be inferred that this is a denial of spiritual gifts or influences. God is a *Spirit*. He is *omnipotent*. He is *everywhere;* and can operate on his creatures, and effect his purposes, without the intervention of a supposed third person, or of any agents whatever.

I will now, in as few words as possible, state the grounds of my belief that there is but one only, self-existent, and true God, and that Jesus Christ is not that being. On this subject, I know not better to whom to resort for information, than to him who was commissioned of the Father to bear witness to the *truth*, and was of him taught what he should *say*, and what he should *speak*.

In addressing his *Father* in prayer, Christ says, "This is life eternal, that they might *know thee, the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Trinitarians assert that the Godhead consists of three persons, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. But Christ here asserts, in language as plain and unequivocal as can be devised, that the *Father* is the *only* true God, saying nothing of the Holy Ghost, and expressly distinguishing the Father from himself. I know not how words can be more explicit. This Father he declares to be Lord of Heaven and earth; to be "his God," and "his Father;" and addresses him as such. In his conversation with the Scribe he asserts, that the Lord our God is *one* Lord;* and approves of the Scribe's reply, who said, "There is *one* God, and there is *none* other but He." Nowhere can I learn that Christ ever made any pretensions to be the self-existent God, or to be possessed of underived power. On the contrary, he repeatedly asserts, that of himself he could do nothing, and that the Father which dwelt in him did the works. Once was he charged with making himself *equal* with God, and once with making himself *God*, and in both instances he refuted the charge. The first time, because "he said that God was his *Father*." To this he immediately replied, "The Son can do *nothing*

* Or, according to the translation of Campbell and others, "The Lord is our God: The Lord is *one*."

of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." And directly after, "I can of mine *own self* do nothing." If at this time, he could, of his own self, either as God or man, have done any thing, can he be acquitted of the charge of *guile?* The second time, for saying, "I and my *Father* are one." From which declaration the Jews drew the inference, that "he made himself God." He however shews them, that by this declaration he only made himself the *Son* of God; and immediately proves to them, that by calling himself "the Son of God," he had assumed a *lower* title than God himself had given to their rulers. For *He* had called *them* Gods. "Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods;" quoting the eighty-second Psalm, in which God addressed the Jewish rulers. "If he called them Gods, (continued Jesus,) unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken (or contradicted,) say ye of him whom the Father hath *sanctified* and *sent* into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am (not God, but) the Son of God?" How can words be more intelligible than these? On another occasion he shews, to use the language of the learned Doctor Campbell, "the infinite disparity" between himself and the great God. When charged with casting out devils by Beelzebub, he says, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the *Son of man*, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against *the Holy Ghost*, it shall not be forgiven him." Where then is the supposed equality between the Father and the Son? And why forgiveness in the one case and not in the other, if the dignity of both be equal?

In another instance, when addressed by the title "*Good*

master," he immediately replies, "Why callest thou *me* good?" There is none good but one, that is God?" Does he not here plainly distinguish himself from the great fountain of original and underived goodness?"*

My rule in the investigation of this subject has been, to construe passages of a doubtful import, by those which are plain and unequivocal, and to consider Christ's declarations of himself, to be of primary regard. I know that to the repeated declarations of Christ, of his limited power and knowledge, and of his dependence on the Father for aid, it is answered, that he had two natures, and that in these cases he spake of himself in the human nature. But, as neither Christ nor the apostles have given us any such intimations, and as it is, in my opinion, utterly impossible to reconcile such a supposition with the character of uprightness and freedom from guile, uniformly attributed to Christ, I am bound to reject such supposition.

I will now attend to the words of the apostles. Paul says to the Corinthians, that "there is none other God but one," "though there be that are *called* Gods." "But to *us*, there is but *one* God, the FATHER; and one Lord Jesus Christ." He says also to the Ephesians, that there is "one Lord" and "one God and Father of all," and that the latter "is *above* all, and *through* all, and *in* all."

* So in the Revelation, (xv. 3, 4,) they who sing "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb," a song not in honour of Moses or the Lamb, but the Lord God Almighty, are represented, "saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Who shall not fear *thee*, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for *thou only* art holy. For all nations shall come and worship before *thee*."

He says also that the *Father* is "the God of Christ; that He is "the head of Christ." That "Christ is God's." That Christ, since the ascension, "liveth unto God;" and that he also "liveth by the power of God," which Christ also says of himself. He says also, that at the resurrection, Christ shall deliver up his kingdom to the Father, and that "the Son also himself shall be subject unto him, (the Father,) that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." He says also of God, in distinction from the "Lord Jesus Christ," that He is the "*only* Potentate," and that He "only hath immortality." Jude also plainly distinguishes between "the *only* Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." *

These passages are all plain, intelligible to the smallest capacity, and about which there can be no dispute. But it is said, that notwithstanding all this, Paul has asserted that Christ is God, and equal with God the Father. Is it credible, that a man of intelligence, inspiration out of the question, will assert things contradictory to each other? And if Paul has asserted Christ to be God, equal with the Father, has he not contradicted himself? And has he not by necessary implication, asserted that there are *two* Gods? Does not such equality necessarily imply plurality? But he has made no such assertions. The passages referred to are Rom. ix. 5; Phil. ii. 6; Heb. i. 8, 9. About the meaning of which, trinitarians have differed among them-

* Paul says also to the Romans, (i. 19, 20,) that "*that* which may be *known* of God," "even his eternal power and Godhead," are manifest from the works of creation. But who will pretend to say that these works shew the existence of God in *three persons?* And if they do not, he either does not so exist, or the declaration of the apostle cannot be true.

selves, as well as with others, and for no other reason but because the passages admit of different interpretations. And it ought not to be forgotten, that our translation was made by trinitarians. As to the passage in Romans, it is maintained that the words admit of this translation as well as that in our Bibles; "God who is over all, be blessed forever." As to the other two, and those in Colossians and Ephesians, which speak of Christ's creating all things, the context, in each passage, plainly shews inferiority, and derived power. That the creation there spoken of cannot be the material world and heavens, is evident, because it is again and again asserted, that of these the Father was the Creator. And the Father and the Son could not, each, have been the Creator of the same things. The creation, therefore spoken of in these passages must be other than the material world, unless it be understood that it was the Father who was in the Son, who created all things; and to this interpretation I have no objections. It should also be remembered, that although Christ be called God, yet the Father is still called *his* God. But who is the God of the Father? No where is it said that the *Father* has a God.

It is said also of John, that notwithstanding he recorded the words of Christ, that the *Father* is the *only true* God, he has yet asserted that the *Son* is the *true God*. Can both propositions be true? Can the *Father* be the *only* true God, and the Son *the* true God? Can any two propositions be more contradictory? But the apostle has made no such contradiction. The latter passage is a beautiful illustration and confirmation of the first. John asserts that they *knew* that the Son of God had come; that he had given them an *understanding*, that they might

know the true God; (the very thing which Christ said was necessary to *eternal life;*) that they were under the true God, by being under his Son Jesus Christ; and that this was the *true* God, and the *eternal life* which God had promised to them who knew him, evidently alluding to the words of Christ.*

The passages which speak of Christ as being the *first begotten*, the *first born*, the *only begotten*, *the Son* of God, the *beginning* of the creation of God, the *image* of God, the *gift* of God, *made* Lord and Christ, *made* like unto his brethren, *exalted* to be a prince and savior, *given* to be head over all things to the church, possessing all fulness at the *pleasure* of the Father, *appointed* heir of all things, *ordained* the Judge of the world, *made* for a little while less than the angels, *made* better than the angels, *given* a name which is above every name, and even the name *Christ*, all shew derived existence and power; not less than those which speak of God, plainly distinguished from Christ, as the *only* Lord God, the *only* potentate, and who *alone* hath immortality.

It is said by John, that "he is antichrist that denieth the *Father* and the *Son;* and that whosoever denieth the *Son*, the same hath not the *Father*. How it can be said that the *Son* is *equal* with the *Father*, that he is *co-eternal* with the Father, and *self-existent;* without denying both *Father* and *Son*, I cannot conceive. Nor can I conceive wherein the relationship of *Father* and *Son*, in any sense, can exist, or be supposed to exist, consistent with this hypothesis. For my part, I dare not deny, that Jesus Christ is the *Son* of God, nor maintain any proposition inconsistent with that truth.

* See Macknight.

Again, it is said that Christ is the God-*man*, Mediator between *God* and *men*. But why *mediate* for that which *himself* can bestow? If he be *omnipotent*, capable of bestowing *all blessings*, and forgiving *all sins*, why *mediate* or *intercede* for the same forgiveness and the same blessings? Why direct us to pray the *Father*, in his *name*? And if he be *very God*, with whom is he mediating but *himself*? And *can* God mediate with himself? Is not equality of the Son with the Father, each being *very God*, incompatible with the office of mediator? and does not such supposition involve a gross absurdity? To me, most certainly. Neither are we warranted by the scriptures in believing that our mediator is of this character. On the contrary, we are expressly assured, in so many words, that the *one* mediator, between *God* and *men*, is the *man* Christ Jesus. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Once more. It is said by trinitarians, that the *Son*, the word of the Father, took man's *nature* in the womb of the virgin, and that two *whole* and *perfect* natures, the *Godhead* and *manhood*, were joined in *one person*, *never* to be divided, whereof is *one* Christ, very God and very man, and that *this* is the Christ who was crucified for us. Yet we are expressly told by the scriptures, that *Christ* performed his miracles by the *help* of God; that the *grace* of God was with him. He himself says that he cast out *devils* by the *spirit* of God; by the *finger* of God; that the *Father* that dwelt in him did the works. To *him* he prayed, again and again, for aid, and to none but him. I have yet heard no reason assigned why he should *pray* if he were himself *very* God; nor why he needed the *grace* of God; nor why the *spirit* of God should be given to him. Nor have I heard any reason assigned why he

always prayed to the *Father*, and directed his disciples *so* to pray, if there was a *person* in the Godhead *equal* with the Father, called the holy spirit; nor do I expect to hear any reason given, nor do I believe that any reason can be given.

These are a summary of the reasons which have induced me to reject, which I do with a strong conviction of its falsity, the received doctrine of the trinity, and to hold the *Father* to be the only true God. But while I do this, I by no means reject Christ, the *Son* of God. That *he* spake as no other man spake; that he was, *peculiarly*, the Son of God; that God was in him reconciling the world to himself; that he is a Prince and a Savior; that he is head over all things to the church; that all judgment is committed into his hands; that he is ordained of God the judge of the quick and the dead, and will finally judge the world, I fully believe. That the same mind may be in you and me that was in him; that we may be guided by the same spirit of charity and forbearance that was manifested in him; and that all our measures and motives may be such as to meet with his approbation, is my sincere prayer.

SAMUEL EDDY.

[*Note by the Publisher.* — The references following were inserted in the first edition at the bottom of each page in which the texts were quoted; but in this edition it was found most convenient to place them here together. The first refers to the 11th page, and the reader may easily ascertain the proper locations of the remainder.]

Luke iv. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 21. John xvi. 2. Acts xviii. 21, 24, xi. 3, i. 5, 12, 21, 27. 1 Cor. xv. 12, 34, i. 2, 6. 11, 15, 34. Acts viii. 37. Rom. x. 9, 14, iv. 17, 18. Phil. iii. 15, 16. Rom. xv. 7. 1 Cor. vii. 19. Eph. v. 20. Col. iii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 15. John xviii. 37. 2 Tim. i. 10. John xvii. 3. Acts xix. 2. Mat. iii. 11. Acts xxiv. 14, 18, 13. John xvii. 3. (1 Thes. i. 9, 10.) Luke x. 21, 23, 46. John xx. 17. Mat. xxvii. 46. Mark xiv. 36, xii. 29, 32. John v. 18, 19, 30, x. 30, 36. Mat. xii. 32. Mark x. 18. 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6. Eph. iv, 5, 6, i. 17. 1 Cor. xi. 3, iii. 23. Rom. vi. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 4. John vi. 57. 1 Cor. xv. 28. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. Jude iv. Acts iv. 24, 26, 27, xvii. 24, 29. Luke x. 21. Mark xiii. 19. Isaiah xliv. 24, xlv. 12. 1 John v. 20. Heb. i. 2, 4, 6, 9, ii. 9, 17. Cor. i. 15, 19. John i. 18, iv. 10. Mat. xvi. 16. Rev. iii. 4. Acts ii. 36, v. 31, xvii. 31. Eph. i. 22. Phil. ii. 9. Jude iv. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. 1 John ii. 22, 23. Mat. ix. 8. John xx. 23. Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, Luke v. 17, ii. 40. Acts ii. 22, x. 38. Mat. xii. 28. Luke xxi. 20. John xiv. 10. Mat. vi. 6, 9. John xvi. 23, iv. 22, 24.

1st Series. No. 165.

MAN BORN UPRIGHT.

By REV. A. B. MUZZEY.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

April, 1841.

Price 3 *Cents.*

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

MAN BORN UPRIGHT.

What is man — what his true nature, rank and capacities? Is he naturally depraved, literally conceived in iniquity and born in sin? Or does he come from his Maker, less corrupt than this, but still dishonored by imperfections? Or is he an exalted and noble being by birth? Each of these opinions has decided and strenuous advocates. In some one of them, it is manifest, the truth must be found. In which shall we find it? This question is by no means an idle speculation. It is one of vital, practical concern. For, according as we view the nature we possess, will be our habitual conduct as moral beings, and our hopes of success. If we believe ourselves to occupy by birth an elevated station, that conviction, whenever and wherever we feel it, cannot but incite us to act in accordance with that station. And, on the other hand, he who regards human nature as corrupt and degraded, whenever and wherever he feels this degradation, must be affected by it in his moral practice. And those who even doubt the purity and ability of their native capacities, must, so far as that doubt produces any effect, be disheartened and betrayed by it into unworthy actions.

Other circumstances will, of course, serve, in each case, to qualify and counteract this influence. But some influence each of the opinions must have. And all, be it more or less, must be good in the one case and evil in the other.

What then is human nature? How shall we ascertain its true rank among the works of God? There are but two sources of correct information on this point. They are a *fair, candid, and thorough, investigation of that nature itself; and the teachings of the inspired volume.* Let us examine each of these sources.

I. How shall we ascertain the place man occupies in the scale of Creation? Evidently by a survey of its inherent properties. These must be determined by the same process which gives us a knowledge of any other portion of the works of God.

The works of God on earth, so far as we can judge, may be divided into three distinct classes; matter, inert, passive matter, the inferior animals, and man. Now how do we decide upon the natural characteristics of the first two of these portions of Creation? How do we determine what is the nature of matter? We proceed to a study of its qualities, and ascertain, if we can, whether it was created for any particular Object, and what that object was, what are the true design, uses and sphere of matter. When we have come to a conclusion in regard to its essential qualities, we say these constitute its nature. If we afterward examine any portion of matter which is wanting in some one or more of these qualities, we do not straightway change our opinion of the nature of matter but say this portion of it is defective, that it wants something which belongs of right to a perfect specimen of matter.

So in relation to the inferior animals. We wish to understand their nature; for this purpose we investigate their various powers and faculties. We seek to ascertain for what Object, if any, they were given them. When by a careful study of the adaptation of these powers and faculties we have arrived at a conclusion in regard to their design and uses, we set the result down as their nature. But where do we go for information on this subject? Of course to those animals which are perfect, that is, the best specimens of their kind. The misshapen and deformed, those which exhibit qualities or dispositions evidently perverted from their original use, we at once reject. All that, either through accident, or by their own fault, or for any reason whatever, are of an inferior description, we never bring forward, but always set aside; for these we say, and rightly so, do not shew the true nature of the animal.

Proceed thus with man. What is *his* nature. To learn this, we must first determine, as we have in the other two cases, by an examination of his powers and faculties, whether they appear to have been formed for any particular Object, and what that object is. But how shall we conduct this investigation? What is the rational and consistent course of proceedure? Shall we look at the streams, discolored and polluted, perhaps, by the soil through which they have flowed? Or shall we repair at once to the fountain? If we pass by the best specimens of the race we depart immediately from what we thought the true mode of examining the nature of matter and of animals. By confining our researches to the bad specimens, to those who have perverted their natural faculties and failed to answer the end of their creation, we shall be led into certain error. Will you point to

the worst man you can find, or to men of ordinary qualities, or to the defects and failures of individuals, and say "*that* is human nature?" If this were done in relation to the inferior animals, we should all unite in saying it was an irrational and unjust course. It would be seen at once that there was no point, however low, to which the nature of the best species of animals might not be degraded by our estimate. Yet this very error, egregious as it is, we are daily committing in our judgments upon human nature. If we detect an instance of great selfishness, the cry is at once raised, "Ah, that is human nature." Does one envy the success of some neighbor; or is he puffed up with pride; or can we detect in him a latent prejudice, the sin is all laid forthwith on poor human nature. As if it were in the perversion of our powers, and the abuse of our faculties, in the indulgence of passions and propensities hostile to the developement of our best qualities, that we were to look for a knowledge of our true nature.

In all justice we ought to give some weight to the better manifestations of character. There are good affections and virtuous tendencies as well as evil ones in man, and why should we pass over these and look at the bad traits of character alone, and say, these are human nature? If there be selfishness, so also is there kindness, love and generosity, in man. If there be pride, so is there humility; if prejudice, so also candor, in the world; if envy, so is there magnanimity. Yet, who ever exclaims, when he witnesses a disinterested, noble act, "that is human nature"? Who, in business transactions, sets down cases of strict principle, of rare integrity and justice, to her account? This we may not do; but the moment we wit-

ness a hard-driven bargain, an overreaching or a sordid spirit, the wrong deed is at once laid to her charge.

The injustice of the popular estimate of human nature becomes still plainer, when we consider that, in the actual conduct of mankind, these vile actions are far outweighed by those of an opposite character. There is, it is true, much prejudice in the world; yet there is far more of fair judgment. In the thousand instances, in which we daily pass an opinion on the actions of others, we speak and feel the simple truth. Occasionally a case arises, in which, with regard to a certain individual, and for peculiar reasons, we look with a prejudiced eye on all he says and does. It is so with envy, jealousy, revenge, and selfishness in its manifold forms. The world in general are far less actuated by these perverse feelings than they are by pure and honorable ones.

If it be asked why men do not perceive this truth, I answer, that it is the very commonness of good qualities that makes them so often pass unappreciated, and even unobserved. While it is the rareness of the base sentiments and vile actions of mankind that makes them striking, when witnessed, and impresses them on the memory. The main current of men's deeds is correct. It flows on so smoothly that we fail to remark it. A wrong action raises a ripple on its surface, and that at once draws attention to itself, and is recorded as the only noticeable phenomenon before us. The rule is forgotten; the exception recollected.

But admit, for the moment, that the above position is incorrect. Prove that the good deeds of mankind are more than counterbalanced by their evil ones, it is unjust to judge human nature entirely by observation, that is by taking man as he is and making his present *character*

our chief standard of judgment. For where will you turn for a specimen of the natural powers and faculties, cultivated, unfolded, and exhibited, according to their true purpose? Are the mass of men thus intellectually, morally, and spiritually, educated? Are their capacities fully developed? Assuredly not. What with erroneous instruction in childhood, and what with man's own errors and sins, and not least his culpable indolence, it is exceedingly rare to see an individual who exhibits in any fair light the true portrait of his original nature. To take then what we witness of human conduct as the only criterion of human nature is manifestly irrational. It must lead us away from the truth.

To illustrate again from the inferior animals. They are prompted by instinct to seek each its appropriate food, and to preserve their own lives. It is their nature to obey these instincts. But they by no means invariably do obey them. They do not always preserve their own lives. Man has devised artifices by which he can induce them to expose and to sacrifice their lives. The bird rushes, with open eyes, into the snare of the fowler. It is the nature, again, of the animals that the mother should preserve her own offspring. Yet the fly sometimes, by mistaking the scent of a certain flower for flesh, will deposit its eggs upon that flower; and when its young are hatched, in consequence of this mistake, they perish from hunger. But no one thinks of citing these and other such cases as a proof that by nature the animal will destroy itself, or the mother its offspring. No, we all perceive that death here proceeds from a misdirection, or the perversion of a life-preserving instinct.

Apply this reasoning to man. He is by nature a Moral being. He has principles, sentiments and feel-

ings that lead him to right and duty. Conscience teaches him what to do and what to avoid. He is a Free being, capable of choosing the right or the wrong. He is also by nature a Religious being; that is, there is an impulse given him at his birth, through which, when his whole nature is developed according to its original tendencies, he is led toward God and the spiritual world. Atheism always does violence to human nature. It takes away ideas the foundation of which is laid in the soul itself. So does moral evil do violence to our nature. Man naturally loves and pursues virtue, that is, absolute good. This is the instinctive tendency of the soul. Selfishness comes from reasoning, from error, from a mistaken view of our nature or our interest, or from both. Hence is it that men disobey the highest instincts of their nature; they resist conscience; they pervert their moral powers.

But, because they disobey their moral and religious instincts and abuse their faculties, is it right forthwith to condemn their nature? The soul, like the animal man, craves its appropriate food; but still we sometimes take moral poison for food. We rush into a snare and are taken captive, when we thought only to obtain food. But should this fact shake one's faith in human nature? No, we mistake a destructive element for the bread of life. Our animal propensities blind and mislead us. We sin through ignorance: inexperience is a source of error. Evil examples and seductive counsels entice us away from God and duty and good.

As the animals are decoyed into suicide, so are we. Conscience is the voice of God, but it is a still, small, voice; it whispers only, of right, and love, and life. The

tempter knows its modest nature and boldly assails it, and clamors, and deafens the ear to its monitions. The soul desires God, and looks naturally to him for a healthful sustenance, as the child asks only plain bread, and finds a relish and good health in simple milk. But just as the animal appetites are soon and easily perverted, and the man comes to reject the food of the child, and to demand unnatural stimulants for diet, so are our spiritual tastes perverted. We come soon to count the pleasures of sin better than the worship of God; we are induced ere-long to prefer the wicked excitements of man's device to the quiet and sweet teachings of the Almighty. But our nature remains unchanged. Observation, experience, and an inward survey of that nature concur, in the end, in proving this truth.

II. I have spoken thus far of our nature in the light of Reason, and as manifested by the legitimate exercise of its powers and capacities. The view we have thus been led to take of it is amply sustained by the Scriptures. Consider the very object of these writings. For whom were they designed? On whose account was it that the omnipotent Jehovah spake in the ancient dispensations of his will? To what being did he, in these last days, address himself by his well-beloved Son? On whom did he shed his own Holy Spirit? What is that creature, whom the Scriptures affirm he hath made to share even his own moral perfections? Is it that mean, grovelling object, toward whom the finger of scorn is now pointed? When we see a man sin we promptly exclaim, "O, that is human nature." And is this indeed our distinguishing attribute? Is it for this reason that revelation speaks of us as "partakers in the Divine Nature?" What, the im-

maculate One, He who cannot even look upon iniquity, brought into such a fellowship! It cannot be, that this is the low, base, and unworthy creature, our language would make him. That must be a noble, dignified being, crowned, as the Psalmist hath said, "with glory and honor," for whom the Creator of the universe hath done such mighty deeds. It can be no defiled, corrupt thing, which he would thus take to his own bosom partnership.

If we examine the Scriptures, and take their testimony relative to the most wicked nations or individuals there mentioned, we shall find in them no denunciations against man's native capacities. In the days of Isaiah the Israelites had become a people, we read, "laden with iniquity." Yet how did God then address them? "Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil." Could they do this, had they, or any of their progenitors, by their sins, corrupted their nature? Is this corruption intimated in the passage? Does it imply that men may sin till their moral constitution shall be utterly depraved? No. In direct connection with the command to wash themselves and be clean of evil, is the promise, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" a renovation positively impossible on that hypothesis, except by a miracle.

Observe the preaching of our Lord and Savior. He came to call sinners to repentance. He sought out everywhere the most depraved of his people. But did he begin by decrying their nature? Did he teach them that it was a mass of pollution? Did he refer to Adam's transgression and to the fall, for the sources of guilt? No, he never so much as alluded to this topic. How de-

ficient was his creed, judged by modern formulas of faith. He never so much as intimated that human nature was that mean, inferior, dishonored, thing which we, too often in our language and thoughts, have made it. But he did teach that man is a child of God, and call him to imitate his Father in Heaven. He did take little children in his arms, and say that "of such is the kingdom of Heaven." And in his severest rebukes, in the darkest picture he drew of the degraded sinner, I read, not a contempt for his nature, but a clear testimony to its original purity. That sharp tone, that cut the proud Pharisee to the quick, was made more awful by the fact that it was a noble nature he had despised, that they were high faculties he had prostituted to his guilty purposes, and godlike powers he had perverted, abased, and brutalized.

Thanks be to God, we cannot withstand the words of inspiration. We may think they are puffed up with pride, ignorant of the world, and ignorant of themselves, who exalt human nature. But the holy record is sure. No pen can expunge from it those glorious words, "God hath made man," that is, *all* men, "upright." We may point to the sins of our neighbor, we may feel our own sins, and dwell upon, and accumulate dark images around them, until we assert, and reiterate the assertion, that human nature is a poor and cheap affair; but the Bible is stronger than we are. And that will forever testify that we are "made little lower than the angels; made after the similitude of God."

III. It were easy to multiply passages of Scripture in proof of the native greatness of the soul. But I prefer leaving this to your own examination. Search those records with a candid and comprehensive spirit, and you will see on every page of them, as in letters of fire, the

sublime truth unfolded in this discourse. You will learn that human nature is pure, that the essential, immutable, and everlasting properties we each brought with us into this world, are exalted and divine.

From what has now been said, it will appear that, both by an examination of human nature itself, and by the scripture estimate of it, we are brought to the conclusion that it is essentially pure, such as to be a fit recipient for the teachings of the Almighty. We are not called of necessity to answer for any consequences that may flow from this doctrine. It is enough to say that it is true. Still, so important are its bearings, that I will offer one or two thoughts on this point.

A belief in the integrity of our nature tends, it is said, to foster pride. I answer, that the gift is a universal one, and it is not what we enjoy in common with all others, whether it be property, honors, favor, or emolument, that fosters pride. It is what we possess, to the exclusion of others, that engenders this passion. If a few only were inspired of the Almighty, these few would exult perhaps in their peculiar privilege, and in an arrogant spirit look down upon all on whom God had not shed these gifts. But now there is no room for pride. As the bland breeze of summer visits the cottage no less than the palace, and none can boast of its favors, so the gentle and refreshing spirit of God breathes its inspirations on all, giving none occasion to pride himself on the endowments of that elevated nature which he shares with the humblest of his race.

Again, how can the rational doctrine of man's native dignity, sustained as it is by Scripture, tend to encourage a lofty and proud spirit, when we are made by it so abso-

lutely dependent upon God? Whence does it derive that "understanding," spoken of in Scripture? Comes it of ourselves? Is it we, who originate the "inspiration"? No, it is the "inspiration of the Almighty that giveth us understanding." A true rendering of this passage makes us still more dependent, if possible, upon God for this gift, than the common one. "It is the divine spirit in man, even the inspiration of the Almighty," &c. Or take still another translation of it.

"There is a spirit in man,
But it is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding."

By no view of this passage, and of the elevation it gives to human nature, can it fail to teach us that of ourselves we have no wisdom, knowledge, or "understanding," that all we have and all we are we owe to God, and that our obligations to Him are a debt that is constantly accumulating, inasmuch as He daily assists us. Were our nature represented as exalted by our own efforts, and all our spiritual acquisitions referred to ourselves, then we might reasonably be proud and self-complacent. It is what separates us from God, and shows our independence of Him, but never our close connection with, and reliance upon Him, that can inflate the spirit.

1. If the view we have taken be correct, it is one of no ordinary moment. Let us keep it ever in our minds. Do not confound, as is too often done, the common character of man with the nature God hath given him. A more gross and pernicious error than this can hardly be conceived. Man as we see him daily around us, is an imperfect, misguided, sinful creature. I would not shut my eyes on the clear fact, that "all have gone out of the

way," which they were once in, that " no man liveth and sinneth not." Guilt, crime, stains of the deepest dye, mark the page of history. " The heart is deceitful above all things," and often is there desperate wickedness, where its existence is least suspected. But these sins do not impair our original faculties. They do not corrode the essence of the soul. No, it is not in the power of man, thanks to his kind Maker, to pollute his own nature. If it were so, that pollution might be transmitted from generation to generation, and accumulate, until we became at length a race of demons. Man cannot sin, and sink so low that, his nature, if subjected to the redeeming power of religion, if he repent and turn from his iniquities, will not rise with its inborn majesty, and proclaim him by birth, no less than by adoption and grace, a son of God.

Never, then, permit yourselves to speak lightly, or to think lightly of these spiritual and immortal endowments. Let no amount of moral evil you may witness, or may yourself commit, force you to abate one particle from the deserved veneration for human nature.

2. Is the view we have taken a just one? Then let us no more lay the burden of our own errors and defects at the door of nature. How many excuse themselves in wrong deeds by the plea that they were born imperfect, and cannot expect, therefore, always to do right. No, you were not the heirs of iniquity. Be not so ungrateful to your Maker, as to charge Him with your faults and follies. Think not to take shelter in this comforting apology. Lay not this flattering unction to your soul. God hath " made man upright." Every crooked, and perverse, and evil thing in him is his own offspring. " Whatsoever

a man soweth," not what was born in him, "that shall he reap." What a tremendous import do these words give to sin. It is the abuse of a nature little lower than the angels. It is the blighting of immortal hopes. It is a defilement of the very image of God. It is the voluntary sale of a divine birthright, it is the parting with a treasure which the infinite ages can never fully restore to us. It brings on us sorrows, compared with which all others are turned into joy. It involves us in self-degradation, in a forfeiture of all that is dearest and best, in calamities and woes of which earth sees but the commencement. Who then can consent to its bondage? Who can even knowingly cherish a thought at war with the high powers of his nature?

3. Do you realize the value of your soul? How then ought you to conduct? Cultivate, I beseech you, these noble faculties. Do not dwell upon them with a false and fruitless pride. "Unto whom much is given, of him will much be required." Do not assert with your lips only, the dignity of your nature. Do it in your life. Act, in every duty, not only in the church, but at home, abroad, in your business, in your recreations, act with the dignity of a son of God. Exhibit to the world, not a character which theologians can cite to prove the innate depravity of the soul, but one on which all may gaze as indeed an image of its Author. Subdue the animal, develope the spiritual, man. Advance, through peril and success, through gladness and through grief, by all that he shall appoint you, advance in moral strength, in holy affections, in the conquest of appetite, passion and sin. God made you upright. Let no tempter prevail over, and cast you down from that high estate.

1st Series. No. 166.

UNITARIANISM

DEFINED AND DEFENDED;

BEING

EXTRACTS FROM LECTURES DELIVERED AT LIVERPOOL IN 1839, BY THREE UNITARIAN MINISTERS, IN ANSWER TO LECTURES AGAINST UNITARIANISM, BY THIRTEEN CLERGYMEN OF THE EPISCOPAL SECT.

PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.

MAY, 1841.

Price 6 *Cents.*

The selection of the following passages, taken from their proper connections, and not arranged in any systematic order, must receive the indulgence of their authors and their readers. It was impossible, without greatly exceeding the size of our Tracts, to indicate the connection of the passages with the several Discourses, while it was thought desirable that the members of our denomination generally should possess some specimens of a series of controversial Lectures which exhibit so much wisdom and faith.

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UNITARIANISM

DEFINED AND DEFENDED.

LECTURE I.—BY REV. MR. THOM.

What is it to be a Christian?

WERE some stranger to our religion inquiring what it is to be a Christian, there are two quarters from which he might derive his ideas of that character. He might draw near to him who is the only perfect expression of Christianity, and when he had sat at the feet of Jesus, listening with hushed heart, and then arisen and joined himself to the meek Prophet of Mercy on his way of Love, he might receive from Christ his impressions of Christianity and catch from the living Master the type of a disciple: or he might turn for information to the Christians of the day, selecting for examination the largest and most prominent classes, and so gather from the common specimen his impressions of their temper, their spirit, and their faith. Each of these modes of inquiry would produce a result of Truth; but the one would be a Truth of reality, and the other only a Truth of description; the one would present to us

what we were seeking, the true idea of a Christian; the other would show with what degree of faithfulness Christians had preserved the spirit of the original, or whether in the copy, in the distant reflection, the features had been faded, marred, distorted; the one would furnish us with the great Master's idea of a Disciple, the other would exhibit the Disciple as a representative of the Master, and assuming to be his Image to the world; in a word, the one would be Christ's idea of a Christian; the other would be only a Christian's idea of Christ. Oh, thanks be to God for the *written* Gospel, for the Epistles written on men's hearts, the living transcripts, give us no worthy ideas of Christ; and were it not for those silent witnesses which speak from a passionless page, and cannot be made to wear the garb of party, which reflect Christ's realities, and not man's ideas, the Image of Jesus had long since been irrecoverably lost!

Let us then for a moment place ourselves beside Jesus, and learn from the Christ what it is to be a Christian. I hear him inviting the weary and the heavy laden to come and find rest unto their souls. I listen for that doctrine of rest, the faith that gives the sin-bound peace. I hear him speak of God, and they are indeed healing words of peace, intended to quell a superstition and a controversy: "God is a spirit: the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."* I hear him speak of Duty: "The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and

* John iv. 23, 24.

with all thy strength: This is the first Commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. This do and thou shalt live." I hear him speak of Heaven: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say lo here, or lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is within you."* I hear him speak to Sin, melted, and transformed into penitence: "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." I hear him speak of Discipleship: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."† "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bare much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another."‡

* Luke xvii. 20, 21. † John xiv. 21, xv. 8, 9, 10. ‡ John xiii, 35.

LECTURE II.—BY REV. MR. MARTINEAU.

The First Disciples.

We call them therefore before us. They are plain, plebeian, hard-handed men of toil, who have labored in the fields and olive-grounds of Judea, or held an oar on the Gallilean Lake; who, nevertheless, have been not without the cottage and the home, the parent, wife and child; belonging, moreover, to a country having something to remember, and more to expect. Addressed by a solitary and houseless wanderer from Nazareth, won by some undefinable attraction that makes them think him a man of God, they follow him awhile, hoping for promotion, if he should prove, as they suspect, to be some great one. Daily this hope declines, but hourly the love increases. They hang upon his words; their passions sink abashed before his look; they blindly follow his steps, knowing nothing but that they will be the steps of mercy; they rebuke the blind beggar who cries; but he calls him groping to him, and sends him dazzled away; they go to help the cripple, and ere they reach him, at a word he leaps up in strength; they fly at the shriek of the maniac from the tombs, when lo! he lapses into silence, and sits at the feet of the Nazarene in the tears of a right and grateful mind. How can they leave him? yet why precisely do they stay? If they depart, it is but to return with joy; and so they linger still, for they learn to trust him better than themselves. They go with him sorrowing; with occasional flashes of brilliant ambition, but with longer darkness between; with lowering hopes, but deepening love; to the farewell meal; to the moonlight

garden, its anguished solitude, its tranquil surrender to the multitude, making the seeming captive the real conqueror; a few of them to the trial; one, to the cross; the women, even to the sepulchre; and all, agitated and unbelieving, were recalled in breathless haste from their despair by the third day's tidings, the Lord has risen indeed! Thenceforth, they too are risen from the dead; the bandages as of the grave, drop from their souls; the spirit of God, which is the spirit of truth, comes to loose them and let go. Not higher did the Lord ascend to the heaven which holds him now, than did they rise above the level of their former life. They understand it all, and can proclaim it; the things that were to come, — that dreadful cross, that third day, so darkly hidden from their eyes, — are shown them now; a thousand things which he had said unto them, rush, by the help of this new spirit, to their remembrance. And forth they go, to tell the things which they have seen and heard. They most of them perished, not without joy, in the attempt; but they *did* tell them, with a voice that could summon nations and ages to the audience; which things are this day sounded in our ears.

Self-evidence of the New Testament Writings.

Suppose that these books are put into our hands for the first time; — disinterred, if you please, from a chamber in Pompeii; — without title, name, date, or other external description; and that with unembarrassed mind and fresh heart, we go apart with these treasures to examine them.

It is not long before their extraordinary character becomes evident. All minds are known by their works, —

the human quite as distinctly as the Divine: and if "the invisible things of God" "are clearly seen" "by the things that are made," and on the material structures of the universe the moral attributes of his nature may be discerned, — with much greater certainty do the secret qualities of a man's soul, — his honesty or cunning, his truthfulness or fraud, — impress themselves on his speech and writings. To a clear eye his moral nature will unerringly betray itself, even in a disquisition; more, in a fiction; more still, in a history; and most of all, in a biography of a personal companion and teacher, drawing forth in turns his friendship and grief, his pity and terror, his love and doubt and trust, his feelings to country, to duty, to God, to heaven. Accordingly in these Gospels, and in the Journal of travels and Collection of letters, which carry out and illustrate the development of a new religion, I find myself in the presence of honest and earnest men, who are plainly strangers to fiction and philosophy, and lead me through realities fairer and diviner than either. They take me to actual places, and tell the events of a known and definite time. They conduct me through villages, and streets, and markets; to frequented resorts of worship, and hostile halls of justice, and the tribunals of Roman rulers, and the theatres of Asiatic cities, and the concourse of Mars' hill at Athens: so that there is no denying their appeal, these things were "not done in a corner."* Yet their frank delineation of public life is less impressive, than their true and tender touches of private history. Following in the steps of the world's domestic prophet, they entered, evening and morning, the homes of men, — especially of men in

* Acts xxvi. 26.

watching and in grief, the wasted in body or the sick in soul: and the unconsciousness with which the most genuine traits of nature gleam through the narrative, the infantile simplicity with which every one's emotions, of sorrow, of repentance, of affection, give themselves to utterance, indicate that, with One who bear the key of hearts, the writers had been into the deep places of our humanity. The infants in his arms look up in the face of Jesus as we read; the Pharisee mutters in our ear his sceptic discontent at that loving "woman who was a sinner" kneeling at the Teacher's feet; and the voice of the bereaved sisters of Lazarus trembles upon the page.

But, above all, these writings introduce me to a Being so unimaginable, except by the great Inventor of beauty and Architect of nature himself, that I embrace him at once, as having all the reality of man and the divinest inspiration of God. Gentle and unconstrained as he is, ever standing, even on the brink of the most stupendous miracles, in the easiest attitudes of our humanity, so that we are drawn to him as to one of like nature, we yet cannot enter his presence without feeling our souls transformed. Their greatness, first recognized by him, becomes manifest to ourselves: the death of conscience is broken by his tones; the sense of accountability takes life within the deep; new thoughts of duty, shed from his lips, shame us for the past, and kindle us for the future with hope and faith unknown before. His promise* fulfils itself, whilst he utters it; and whenever we truly love him, God comes, and "makes his abode with" us. * * * * Whoever, calmly affirming himself the Son and express similitude of God, can thereby draw to him,

* John xiv. 23.

instead of driving from him, the affections of the wise and good, proclaims a thing self-evident; requiring, however, to be stated, in order to be tested.

Of such *self-evidence* as this, the gospels appear to me to be full. Whenever men shall learn to prefer a religious to a theological appreciation of Christ, and esteem his mind greater than his rank, much more of this kind of internal proof will present itself. It has the advantage of requiring no impracticable learning, and being open, on internal study of the books, to all men of pure mind and genuine heart; it is moral, not literary; addressing itself to the intuitions of conscience, not to the critical faculties. It makes us disciples, on the same principles with the first followers of Christ, who troubled themselves about no books, and forged no chains of scholastic logic to tie them to the faith; but watched the Prophet, beheld his deeds of power, felt his heavenly spirit, heard his word, found it glad tidings, and believed. In short, it is identical with the evidence to which our Lord was so fond of appealing when he said, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him;"* "every one that is of the truth heareth my voice;"† "if I do not the works of my Father, believe me not;"‡ "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;"§ "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."‖ This spiritual attraction to Christ, arising out of mere contemplation and study of the interior of his life, is enough to bring us reverently to his feet, — to ac-

* John vi. 44. † John xviii. 37. ‡ John x. 37. § John x. 27. ‖ John vii. 17.

cept him as the divinely-sent image of Deity, and the appointed representative of God. If this be not discipleship, allow me to ask, "*What is it?*"

I consider, then, this *internal or self-evidence* of the New Testament, as incomparably the most powerful that can be adduced; as securing for Christianity an eternal seat in human nature, so as to throw ridicule on the idea of its subversion.

Progressive unfolding of Divine Wisdom.

We are warned that "the Bible is *not* a shifting, mutable, uncertain thing." We echo the warning, with this addition, that Christianity *is* a progressive thing; not a doctrine dead, and embalmed in creeds, but a spirit living and impersonated in Christ. Two things are necessary to a revelation: its record, which is permanent; its readers, who perpetually change. From the collision of the lesson and the mind on which it drops, starts up the living religion that saves the soul within, and acts on the theatre of the world without. Each eye sees what it can, and what it needs; each age developes a new and nobler idea from the immortal page. We are like children, who, in reading a book above their years, pass innocently and unconsciously over that which is not suited to their state. In this divine tale of Christ, every class and every period seizes, in succession, the views and emotions which most meet its wants. It is with Scripture as with nature. The everlasting heavens spread above the gaze of Herschel, as they did over that of Abraham; yet the latter saw but a spangled dome, the former a forest of innumerable worlds. To the mind of this profound observer, there was as much a *new creation*, as if those heavens had been,

for the time, called up and spread before his sight. And thus is it with the Word of God. As its power and beauty develope themselves continually, it is as if Heaven were writing it now, and leaf after leaf dropped directly from the skies. Nor is there any heresy like that, which denies this progressive unfolding of divine wisdom, shuts up the spirit of heaven in verbal metaphysics and scholastic creeds of a half-barbarous period, — treats the inspiration of God as a dry piece of antiquity, and cannot see that it communes afresh with the soul of every age; and sheds, from the living Fount of truth, a guidance ever new.

LECTURE III. — BY REV. MR. THOM.

Christianity not the Property of Critics and Scholars.

It was stated in Christ Church, by the Rev. Mr. Byrth, that the controversy between us was solely a question of Interpretation. It is so, because, in the case cited, our dispute is about doctrines. The question of *Unitarianism* or *Trinitarianism* must be decided by Interpretation after Criticism has fixed the Text to be interpreted; but I deny, altogether, that the question of *Christianity* or *No-Christianity* is to be decided by any such imperfect and doubtful instrument. Though no one honors Scholarship more, or has a profounder veneration for its noble functions, and altogether renouncing the vulgarity of depreciating its high offices, and maintaining, wherever I have influence, especially for our own Church and in our own day, the necessity for a learned Ministry, able to refresh their souls at the original wells, and unfrighted by

confident dogmatism to give a reason for the faith that is in them, I yet declare, that Christianity is a Religion for the people; that the Gospel was originally preached to the poor; that Christ is manifested to the heart and soul of every man whom he attracts by heavenly sympathy; that when not many wise, not many learned were called, the lowly but honest in heart, recognized the divine brightness, and sat at the feet of Jesus docile and rejoicing; and I protest altogether against any learned Aristocracy, any literary Hierarchy, any priestly Mediators, having more of the true light that lighteth every man than the humblest of their brethren, who has taken to his heart the free gift of God, and loves the Lord Jesus with sincerity.

Now, strange to say, this principle was broadly admitted. It was broadly admitted that Christianity is not the property of scholars or critics, but the gift of God to all men; and yet, with a remarkable inconsistency, it was added, that "the all men" to whom Christianity is the gift of God, must find in it the doctrine of the Trinity, else they are no Christians at all. That is, Christianity is the gift of God to those who, by the aids of interpretation and criticism, become Trinitarians, and to all those who, following their leaders, accept this doctrine; but is not the gift of God to Unitarians, who, though loving Jesus as their Light on Earth and their Fore-runner amid the skies, cannot so read either the written Gospel or the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, as to collect from them the doctrine of a Trinity. If Trinitarianism is Christianity exclusively, then Christianity *is not* the gift of God to all men; for many, in all ages of the Church, and in the first century,

perhaps, without exception, have accepted Christ, but knew no Trinity. If Trinitarianism is Christianity exclusively, then Christianity *is* the property of critics and scholars, for that doctrine is not a self-evidencing Truth, it does not shine out from the Gospels so that no honest mind and pure heart can fail to receive it, and, if capable of being proved at all, it can only be proved by a most technical and subtle logic, by far-fetched inferences from disconnected texts, every one of which is open to a hostile criticism, and by a most scholastic and indirect system of interpretation, which is a task, and that a most painful one, for plain men to comprehend. My audience will be enabled to judge of this matter for themselves when I tell them that one of the strongest reliances of modern Trinitarians, until proved to be completely fallacious, was the power of the Greek article; and that one of the texts long used in this controversy, and still used, owes its whole importance to an accident so minute as this, whether the letter O was printed with a central dot, or without the dot; so that the chance touch of a transcriber might put in or put out one of the principal proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now I further declare, that all the strongest evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity is exactly of the same critical nature — that the only text of the slightest difficulty, cited in Christ Church on Wednesday evening, owes its whole force to a question of punctuation; and that the best critics and scholars, and they Trinitarians, for true scholars never degrade their high calling, nor enter the solemn sanctuary open to them alone, to falsify the oracle, give many authorities against the Trinitarian, and in favor of the Unitarian, Interpretation. Now will any man tell me that the doctrine of the

Trinity, which, if true, is the most awful truth that ever bowed down the heart, that the God of Heaven walked this earth, a partaker of our sufferings and our sorrows, and lived our life, and died our death, would be left to be proved by evidence of this nature, by a controversy nearly two thousand years after the Revelation, about the force of the Greek article and the punctuation of a Greek manuscript? Is this the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world? There could have been no difficulty in revealing this doctrine, in words at least, if it was intended to be revealed. The Athanasian Creed is at least explicit enough, and leaves us in no doubt of the purpose of its Author. Now I conclude that if Trinitarianism alone is Christianity, and if such are the processes of criticism and interpretation by which alone that doctrine can be proved, then Trinitarianism *is the property of Critics and Scholars, and those who implicitly trust them;* and Christianity requiring us either to be Critics or to prostrate ourselves before Critics, not agreed among themselves, is *not* the free "gift of God to all men." The rightful privileges of critics and scholars are large enough, and let no man disown them; but I do disown this literary Hierarchy arrogating to themselves sole access to the oracles of God, and limiting Christ's free approach to the souls of the people to long processes of inferential reasoning and the winding ways of a syllogism. I entreat them to stand aside, and let the living Jesus come into communication with the living heart, and not place themselves, like the multitude who threatened the blind beside the way, between the ready mercy of the Heavenly Teacher and the humblest follower who seeks his face, that a ray of the light that shineth there may fall

upon eager and wistful, though dimmed and earth-stained eyes. "And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way-side begging. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee."

LECTURE IV.—BY REV. MR. GILES.

Christ crucified and Christ glorified.

Our views of Christ make his history of most precious value to us — his life, his death, his crucifixion and his resurrection — Christ becomes to us the great interpreter of Providence, equally of its fears and hopes. He becomes to us the symbol of humanity, equally of its grief and glory — near his cross we weep over death, and at his tomb we rejoice in the certainty of life. In Christ crucified, we see our nature in its earthly humiliation; in Christ glorified, we behold it in its immortal triumph. As Jesus on the cross sets forth our sorrow, so Jesus from the tomb sets forth our hope. Identified with Jesus in the one, we are also identified with him in the other.

In Christ on the cross I see our crucified humanity — in Christ risen and ascending I see the same humanity glorified; at the cross of Jesus my heart would sink, but at his empty grave my hope is settled and my soul at ease. I go to that vacant tomb, and there I am shown that the bands of death are loosed, and the gates of glory are lifted up. Near Jesus on the cross, I have but thick clouds and darkness; in Jesus risen the shadows are melted, and the gloom is lost in brightness, and the sun which burst it shines forth more resplendent — the blackness of the sky breaks forth into light, and the wrath of the ocean softens into peace, the curtain of mist is folded up, and a lovely world bursts upon my gaze. When I stand at the cross I have man imaged in fears, in struggles and in death. I have around me our nature in its crimes and passions; but when I see the ascending and glorified Christ, I behold humanity in its most triumphant hopes. When I stand over the silent tomb of Jesus, and would weep, as if all beneath and beyond the skies were hopeless, a light shines out from the darkness, and throws a halo of peace about the desponding soul.

In both parts of his life and history we have opposing aspects of Providence. But if in his sufferings we have the pillar of cloud, in his glory we have the pillar of fire; and in this wilderness pilgrimage we are saddened and solemnized by the one, — enlightened and guided by the other. Christ crucified and Christ glorified, united in our faith and feelings, identified with our nature, our history, and our race, opens views to the Christian's soul, not only of consolation but of triumph, that defy expression. It pours light and hope and dignity on universal destiny and on every individual condition. In analogy

with God's material creation in its workings, it shows glory arising out of humiliation, and renovated beauty from apparent destruction — it shows in man as in nature — the world of grandeur, of purity, and of softness — born in the throes of chaotic formation; the streams of spring filled with the year's rejoicing gushing out of the frozen fountains of winter; the fresh, and bright, and peaceful morning generated in the midnight storm. If these views of Christ are seated in our hearts and faith: if we truly identify ourselves with one as with the other: feeling that in each case Christ is simply and perfectly our brother, — what can deaden our hope, and what can sever us from duty? Though friends be absent and enemies be fierce, and pain wreck our frames and poverty lay bare our dwellings, and disappointment wait on our struggles, and grief thicken heavily on our souls, in Christ suffering there is our worst extremity; in Christ glorified there is that worst extremity redeemed into the fulness of salvation; in Christ we see personified our entire humanity, except its sins; in him we behold its subjection and its triumph. View its pains in his humiliation, and its future prospects in his victory, and what a glory does it not spread upon our race? Is there a single track of the past on which it does not rain showers of light — on which it does not leave the persuasion of immortal and universal existence? By Christ's doctrines and his life we are led to the conclusion that no human existence has been ever spent in vain; that of all the vast ocean of intelligent beings with which generations have flooded the earth; that in that vast universe of life, one heart has never panted without a purpose; that no thought ever started into being, not a throb of misery,

not a solitary charity, not a silent prayer, not an honest effort, not a fervent wish or desire, not a single good intention, not a single instance of sacrifice or worth, ever existed to be destroyed, but that on the contrary they have been transferred to more genial scenes in another world, and left seeds for better fruits in this. Believing on Christ the crucified and the glorified, and still regarding him as the image of God, it is pleasant to dwell equally upon the past and upon the future; to think of the good and true who suffered here for virtue, collected hereafter in all the unity of peace, having escaped the fightings of earth, settled in the joys of heaven. But why confine ourselves to the excellent and the great? The glory of Christ proclaims life to all; it attracts to itself whosoever lived or suffered on earth, all that ever will live or suffer. Into what a glory has Christ then not entered: go to the most seclusive church yard: worlds there moulder in the smallest space; within its range as many sleep as might have peopled an empire, and in a few steps we may walk over millions. Beneath those pacings what parents and children, and companions, have mouldered? What friendships, and hopes, and energies have melted in this simple dust?

But why say a Church-yard? All earth is a grave. The world is sown with bodies; is futurity as filled with souls? Is this spot on which we breathe for a moment a mere speck between two eternities of infinite nothingness? Have the generations as they vanished, sunk into eternal sleep, so that "*It is finished*," should be the proper epitaph of all departed humanity? Christ alone gives the full solution of this awful problem; and this solution is clear and consolatory, as we feel him to be of ourselves.

He is thus the great type of our death and of our life, throwing light over the grave, and opening to our faith a growing and everlasting future, — where all exist, the great and good to more perfect, and the evil to be redeemed, — and where every stream that flows on to eternity will bear along with it a fresh burden of joy and beauty. Jesus the crucified, and Jesus the glorified, of simple but holy humanity, is the great interpreter of the past and the future, and by him interpreted, how glorious are the words, all our memories on earth and our hopes in heaven.

LECTURE V. — BY REV. MR. MARTINEAU.

Jesus, the Representative of the Deity.

The person of Christ may be contemplated as an object of religious reverence, or as an object of moral imitation. He may appear to our minds as the representative of Deity, or as the model of humanity; teaching us, in the one case, what we should believe, and trust, and adore in heaven; in the other, what we should do on earth, — the rule of faith in the one relation, the rule of life in the other.

Did his office extend only to the latter, were he simply an example to us, displaying to us merely what manhood ought to be, he might indeed constitute the centre of our morality; but he would not properly belong to our religion: he would be the object of affections equal and social, not devout; he would take a place among things human, not divine; would be the symbol of visible and definite duties, not of unseen and everlasting realities. A

Christianity which should reduce him to this relation, would indeed be a step removed above the mere cold preceptive system, which depresses him into a law-giver; but it would no more be entitled to the name of a *religion*, than the Ethics of Aristotle, or the Offices of Cicero.

It is then as the type of God, the human image of the everlasting Mind, that Christ becomes an object of our *Faith*. Once did a dark and doubting world cry, like Philip on the evening of Gethsemane, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us;" but now has Christ "been so long with us" that we, "who have seen him, have seen the Father." This I conceive to have been the peculiar office of Jesus; to *show us*, not to *tell us*, the spirit of that Being who spreads round us in Infinitude, and leads us through Eternity. The universe had prepared before us the *scale* of Deity; Christ has filled it with his own *spirit;* and we worship now, not the cold intellectual deity of natural religion; not the distant majesty, the bleak immensity, the mechanical omnipotence, the immutable stillness, of the speculative Theist's God; but One far nearer to our worn and wearied hearts; One whose likeness is seen in Jesus of Nazareth, and whose portraiture, suffused with the tints of that soul, is impressed upon creation; One, therefore, who concerns himself with our humblest humanities, and views our world with a domestic eye, whose sanctity pierces the guilty mind with repentance, and then shelters the penitent from rebuke; who hath mercy for the victims of infirmity, and a recall for the sleepers in the grave. Let Messiah's mind pass forth to fill all time and space; and you behold the Father, to whom we render a loving worship.

In order to fulfil this office of revealing, in his own

person, the character of the Father, Christ possessed and manifested all the *moral* attributes of Deity. His absolute holiness; his ineffable perceptions of right; his majestic rebuke of sin; his profound insight into the corrupt core of worldly and hypocritical natures, and to the central point of life in the affectionate and genuine soul; his well-proportioned mercies and disinterested love, fill the whole meaning of the word Divine; God can have no other, and no more, perfection of character intelligible to us.

LECTURE VI.—BY REV. MR. MARTINEAU.

Vicarious Redemption.

There appears to be nothing in nature and life, at all analogous to the vicarious principle attributed to God in the Trinitarian scheme of redemption. There is nowhere to be found any proper transfer or exchange, either of the qualities, or of the consequences, of vice and virtue. The good and evil acts of men do indeed affect others *as well* as themselves; the innocent suffer *with* the guilty, as in the case before adduced, of a child suffering in health by the excesses of a parent. But there is here no endurance *for* another, similar to Christ's alleged endurance in the place of men; the infliction on the child is not deducted from the parent; it does nothing to lighten his load, or make it less than it would have been, had he been without descendants; nor does any one suppose his guilt alleviated by the existence of this innocent fellow-sufferer. There is a nearer approach to analogy in those cases of crime, where the perpetrator seems to escape, and to leave

the consequences of his act to descend on others; as when the successful cheat eludes pursuit, and from the stolen gains of neighbors constructs a life of luxury for himself; or when a spendthrift government, forgetful of its high trust, turning the professions of patriotism into a lie, is permitted to run a prosperous career for one generation, and is personally gone before the popular retribution falls, in the next, on innocent successors. Here no doubt the harmless suffer *by* the guilty, in a certain sense *in the place of* the guilty; but not in the sense which the analogy requires. For there is still no substitution; the distress of the unoffending party is not struck out of the offender's punishment; does not lessen, but rather aggravates *his* guilt; and instead of fitting him for pardon, tempts the natural sentiments of justice to follow him with severer condemnation. Nor does the scheme receive any better illustration from the fact, that whoever attempts the cure of misery must himself suffer; must have the shadows of ill cast upon his spirit from every sadness he alleviates; and interpose himself to stay the plague which, in a world diseased, threatens to pass to the living from the dead. The parallel fails, because there is still no transference: the appropriate sufferings of sin are not given to the philanthropist; and the noble pains of goodness in him, the glorious strife of his self-sacrifice, are no part of the penal consequences of others' guilt; they do not cancel one iota of those consequences, or make the crimes which have demanded them, in any way, more ready for forgiveness.

To the fundamental assertion of the vicarious system, that the Deity cannot, without inconsistency and imperfection, pardon on simple repentance, the whole tenor of

the Bible is one protracted and unequivocal contradiction. So copious is its testimony on this head, that if the passages containing it were removed, scarcely a shred of Scripture relating to the subject would remain. "Pardon, I beseech thee," said Moses, pleading for the Israelites, "the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now; and the Lord said, *I have pardoned according to thy word.*"* Will it be affirmed, that this chosen people had their eyes perpetually fixed in faith on the great propitiation, which was to close their dispensation, and of which their own ceremonial was a type? — that whenever penitence and pardon are named amongst them, this reference is implied, and that as this faith was called to mind and expressed in the shedding of blood at the altar, such sacrificial offerings take the place, in Judaism, of the atoning trust in Christianity? Well then, let us quit the chosen nation altogether, and go to a heathen people, who were aliens to their laws, their blood, their hopes, and their religion; to whom no sacrifice was appointed, and no Messiah promised. If we can discover the dealings of God with such a people, the case, I presume, must be deemed conclusive. Hear then what happened on the banks of the Tigris. "Jonah began to enter into the city," (Nineveh,) "and he cried and said, yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even unto the least of them." "Who can tell," (said the decree of the king ordaining the fast,) "if God will turn

* Numb. xiv. 19, 20.

and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not."* And when the prophet was offended, first at this clemency to Nineveh, and afterwards that the canker was sent to destroy his own favorite plant, beneath whose shadow he sat, what did Jehovah say? "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?"† — and who are not likely, one would think, to have discerned the future merits of the Redeemer.

There is no reason why any thing should be supplied in our thoughts, to alter the plain meaning of the announcements of prophets and holy men, of God's unconditional forgiveness on repentance. "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering; the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."‡ "Wash you, make you clean," says the prophet Isaiah in the name of the Lord; "put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."§ Once more,

* Jon. iii. 5 — 10. † Jon. iv. 10, 11. ‡ Psal. li. 16, 17.
§ Isaiah i. 16 — 18.

"When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die."* Nor are the teachings of the Gospel at all less explicit. Our Lord treats largely and expressly on the doctrine of forgiveness in several parables, and especially that of the prodigal son; and omits all allusion to the propitiation for the past. He furnishes an express definition of the terms of eternal life; "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, why callest thou me good; there is none good save one, that is God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." And Jesus adds, "if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."† This silence on the prime condition of pardon cannot be explained by the fact, that the crucifixion had not yet taken place, and could not safely be alluded to, before the course of events had brought it into prominent notice. For we have the preaching of the Apostles, after the ascension, recorded at great length, and under very various circumstances, in the book of Acts. We have the very "words whereby," according to the testimony of an angel, "Cornelius and all his house shall be saved;" these, one would think, would be worth hearing in this cause: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of

* Ezek. xxxiii. 14 — 16. † Matt. xix. 16 — 21.

all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree; him God raised up the third day, and showed openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."* Did an Evangelical missionary dare to preach in this style now, he would be immediately disowned by his employers, and dismissed as a disguised Socinian, who kept back all the "peculiar doctrines of the Gospel."

Nowhere, then, in Scripture do we meet with anything corresponding with the prevailing notions of vicarious redemption; everywhere, and most emphatically in the personal instructions of our Lord, do we find a doctrine of forgiveness, and an idea of salvation, utterly inconsistent with it. He spake often of the unqualified clemency of God to his returning children; never once of the satisfaction demanded by his justice. He spake of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; but was silent on the sacrificial faith, without which penitence is said to be unavailing. Nor did he, like his modern disciples, teach that there are *two separate salvations*, which must follow each other in a fixed order; first, redemption from the penalty, secondly, from the spirit, of sin; pardon for the past, before sanctification in the present; a removal of the "hindrance in God," previous to its annihilation in ourselves. If indeed there were in Christianity two

* Acts x. 34 — 44.

deliverances, discriminated and successive, it would be more in accordance with its spirit to invert this order; — to recall from alienation first, and announce forgiveness afterwards; to restore from guilt, before cancelling the penalty; and permit the *healing* to anticipate the *pardoning* love. At least, there would seem, in such arrangement, to be a greater jealousy for the holiness of the divine law, a severer reservation of God's complacency for those who have broken from the service of sin, than in the system, which proclaims impunity to the rebel will, ere yet its estrangement is renounced. If the outward remission precedes the inward sanctification, then does God admit to favor the yet unsanctified; guilt keeps us in no exile from him: and though the holy Spirit is to follow afterwards, it becomes the peculiar office of the cross to lift us as we are, with every stain upon the soul and every vile habit unretraced, from the brink of perdition to the assurance of glory: the divine lot is given to us, before the divine love is awakened in us: and the heirs of heaven have yet to become the children of holiness. With what consistency can the advocates of such an economy accuse its opponents of dealing lightly with sin, of deluding men into a false trust, and administering seductive flatteries to human nature? What! shall we, who plant in every soul of sin a Hell, whence no foreign force, no external God, can pluck us, any more than they can tear us from our identity; — we, who hide the fires of torment in no viewless gulf, but make them ubiquitous of guilt; — we, who suffer no outward agent from Eden, or the Abyss, or Calvary, to encroach upon the solitude of man's responsibility, and confuse the simplicity of conscience; — we, who teach that God will not, and even

cannot, spare the froward, till they be froward no more, but must permit the burning lash to fall, till they cry aloud for mercy, and throw themselves freely into his embrace; — shall we be rebuked for a lax administration of peace, by those who think that a moment may turn the alien into the elect?

LECTURE VII. — BY REV. MR. THOM.

The Doctrine of the Trinity.

I would now call your attention to the precise state of the argument so far as we have advanced in it. We have taken for granted the Unity of God, which no Christian denies. We have found that the belief of three persons in one God is not reconcilable with any *human* conception of that admitted unity: we have found that there was no *direct* evidence in the Bible for the doctrine of the Trinity; and lastly, we have examined some of the very strongest passages of Scripture, on which that doctrine is attempted to be established, *through an inferential mode of reasoning*.

I might stop here then, and without looking at the Scripture evidence against the doctrine, but only the evidence in its favor, declare that such a doctrine could not possibly have such an insufficient publication. The very passages brought forward to sustain it, disprove it. They all speak of derived powers, and of glory communicated. They are all in the strain, — "Therefore God, even *his* God, hath highly exalted him, and *given* him a name that is above every name." Nay, take that passsage, than which there is none in which dominion is more emphati-

cally ascribed to Christ, and see how it closes: — "and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be all in all." — 1 Cor. xv. 28. We shall not, however, treat Trinitarianism so lightly as to dismiss it, unproved upon its own showing; we shall not rest satisfied with pointing out the insufficiency of its Scriptural authority, but bring against it the overpowering force of opposing Scripture; and as we have given specimens of the biblical evidence for, advance something of the biblical evidence against, the Trinity.

In the first place, then, this doctrine cannot be true, because there are some passages in which *it is expressly and plainly* declared that the Father alone is the one God, not the Father, *and* the Son, *and* the Spirit, but the FATHER. "Father! — this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "But to us there is but ONE GOD, the FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

"There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

"Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in Heaven; *neither the Son*, but the Father."

These declarations are surely sufficient to protect Unitarianism from having no warrant in Scripture. They contain direct, positive, definite assertions; they assert that there is one God, and that Jesus Christ is *not* that God. It is not possible for human language to express

more clearly or more guardedly the simple faith of Unitarian Christianity. Yet we are told that only the ingenuity of heretics has obliged Trinitarians to have recourse to unscriptural language. Strange, certainly, that Holy Writ should have itself expressed the creeds of heresy and damnable error, and rendered it impossible to express in its sacred words the Creeds of Truth!

I quote, in the second place, some passages out of a multitude, in which ideas are connected with Christ which are utterly inconsistent with the supposition of his deity. "I came not to do mine own will." "I can of myself do nothing." "If I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honoreth me." — John viii. 54. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in himself." — John v. 26. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I *live by the Father*." — John vi. 57. "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak." — John xii. 49, 50.

"The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." — John xiv. 24.

"I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." — John xx. 17.

"When ye have lifted up the Son of man on high, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things." — John viii. 28.

Ecclesiastical History has already acquainted us with the device that sets aside the plain meaning of these passages. It is said that Jesus Christ had *two natures*, was composed of two minds, that he was both man and God;

and thus does Trinitarianism openly assert mysteries of an opposite character. Three Persons in one Essence is unintelligible enough; but no sooner is this propounded to us, than we are called off to a directly opposite mystery of two Essences in one Person. And here we cannot be put off with the metaphysical sophistry that we do not know the nature of God, for we do know something of the nature of *man;* and we do say that never was there a greater abuse of the moral meanings of the word Faith, than to set forth, that God's nature and man's nature so united together as to form one inseparable person, may be embraced as an object of Faith. The true nature and office of Faith is to carry us from the seen to the unseen, — to give us moral confidence in that world which we do not see, from our moral experience in this world which we do see, — and in that portion of God's ways which the future conceals, from what we know of that portion of them which the present unfolds. Faith is moral, not metaphysical; and, above all, finds no merit and no efficacy in assenting to unmeaning words.

As before, of the doctrine of the Trinity, so now of this doctrine of the Hypostatic Union, as it is called, I ask for a single hint throughout the New Testament of the inconceivable fact that, in the body of Jesus, resided the mind of God and the mind of man, — two natures, the one finite, the other infinite, yet making but one person, — a difficulty you will perceive the very opposite of that of the Trinity; for whereas it teaches three persons in one nature, this teaches two natures in one person. But we have already traced, in Ecclesiastical History, the origin of this view, and the necessity of its appearance, in subservience to the doctrine of the Trinity.

I will only apply one scriptural test to this theory of the two natures in Christ. And it is one from which Trinitarians cannot escape by their ordinary refuge of avoiding one set of statements by referring them to the humanity of Jesus, and another set of statements by referring them to his deity. It is God the Son, whom Trinitarians represent as becoming incarnate in the body of Jesus; it was God the Son who took humanity into union with deity; therefore, whenever Jesus, in his human nature, speaks of the divinity that dwelt within him, inspired him, and wrought through him, it must be God the Son to whom he refers. But this is never the case: Scripture does not know this doctrine, nor support its requisitions. It is always, "*the Father* who dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

I have not taken up that other thread of supposed scriptural intimations, which is thought to connect the Holy Spirit as a third Person in the unity of the godhead. This portion of the argument, strangely neglected by Trinitarians, who generally take for granted the deity and personality of the Holy Ghost as following without debate from the deity of Christ, since three not two is the favorite mythological and theological number, is however to form the subject of a separate lecture. Not wishing to anticipate the argument, I shall only adduce one remarkable passage, in proof that the Holy Spirit could not, in the first age of the Gospel, have a deity and personality ascribed to it distinct from the deity and personality of God the Father. When Paul came to Ephesus, he found there some disciples, of whom he inquired, — "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" The answer is remarkable: "We have not so much as heard

whether there be any Holy Ghost." Now is it possible that the Holy Ghost should be the third person of the Trinity, a constituent person in the Christian God, and that these "believers," though only disciples of John, should have been uninstructed in the doctrine? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, God himself in communication with man, naturally or supernaturally, the enlightening influence of the Spiritual Father revealing Himself to the spiritual nature of His children.

I do not know what may appear convincing to other minds, but to me the Ecclesiastical History of the doctrine of the Trinity, with its rise in *human* sources of Philosophy and Motive, and not in Revelation, seems a fact capable of being most clearly traced. Rarely indeed does the origin of an error so conspicuously disclose itself: rarely is its course so open to observation. On the other hand, if there is not decisive proof in Scripture of the strict and personal Unity of God, I must think that it is vain to prove any doctrine from the words of the Bible — for sure I am that there is no doctrine more distinctly, more guardedly, more simply, more repeatedly stated, than the great doctrine, that there is One God, and that the FATHER is that God.

We are told that the "invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Yet the Universe reveals no Trinity. Reason knows and requires no Trinity. Natural Religion is not Trinitarian. Scripture speaks of One God the Father, and of One Lord Jesus Christ. Gentile Philosophy and Ecclesiastical History *are* Trinitarian. In *their* pages we find this subject. Ecclesiastical History has narrated the rise and

progress of these doctrines — and to Ecclesiastical History shall they finally be referred, — when another chapter is added, a chapter that unhappily yet remains to be written, the history of their decline and fall.

LECTURE VIII.—BY REV. MR. GILES.

Importance of Faith in the Powers and Capacities of Man's Nature.

To what purpose is all this blackening of human nature? It cannot promote humility; for to be humble is not to be degraded. If a sense of degradation corresponded with humility, we should be more humble as we descended to the level of the brutes. It cannot inspire a poignant sense of guilt, nor a true feeling of confession, for as it takes away natural dignity it leaves nothing from which a man can fall; and as it denies personal capacity, it must in the same degree weaken the feeling of personal accountability. He whose moral sorrow will ever lie most profoundly is one that has the consciousness of having abused high and great capacities; of having, by his own sins, become unworthy of his nature; of having done despite to the spirit of God within him, the light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world; of having apostatised from his godlike destiny. But to tell a man, as orthodoxy does, first that he is morally imbecile, and then that he is personally guilty, is an absolute derangement and confusion of all our moral ideas. It is well that essentially the sources of our conduct in general, are beyond the reach of theology; or doctrines like these, would stop all motives to exertion, would destroy the

hopes of the good, and strike dead the efforts of the penitent. As it is they are not without great and serious evils. They take from virtue that which is its most noble distinction, when rightly understood, a sense of individual and independent action : — they attach a slavish spirit to religion, which, to a great extent, stifles the free and voluntary service of the heart. Yet worse still, to maintain an extreme theory, men are driven to malign their nature, and to seek for all manner of blame against it — to deny the excellence and reality of virtues — of which an unsophisticated observer could not entertain a doubt, to invent all motives for goodness but the true ones. It is a sad necessity in which men place themselves when they are compelled to do violence to their own hearts, and injustice to those of others, when their system forces them to repress their rising pleasure in the beauty of virtue, and to change their unbidden admiration into qualified condemnation. If the man called heretical, or one called unregenerate, visit the sick, clothe the naked, do in fact every work of mercy, have a heart of love and a hand of bounty — revere his God in all sincerity, and worship him in truth, the evangelical moralist must assert, that it is all worthless, and is, in fact, of the nature of sin. Though one who is called regenerate should do no more, and to all evidence, not in a better spirit, he is esteemed a most godly and pious Christian. The man who cannot believe as the creeds or a party require, may do every work which Christ will judge him by, and be refused his name ; but if he has the blessing of his master in heaven, he may care little for the anathema of men upon earth. If Unitarianism delivered us from nothing else than this spiritual injustice, it is a great redemption.

If I am asked, in turn, why I maintain the doctrine of human dignity, I answer, first, because it raises my homage to God. I understand him no otherwise than as he is emblemed in the human soul, exalted and purified: without this creation is a blank to me, and the scripture a dead letter. Regarding it also as his work, I revere him through his work, the more profoundly, the more I believe it worthy of him. I cannot conceive it an honor to God, that the only being here who has capacity to know him, the only being who reflects his attributes, the only being who admires his universe and discerns him in it, should be wholly corrupt: I cannot think that such a doctrine gives him glory. I answer secondly — because it teaches me to hope for man; teaches me to hope for him in this world and the next: while I have faith in the capacity, I can never lose hope in the development, but if man be powerless as well as depressed, I have no proper ground for expectation, and the difficulties of the present are softened by no light from the future. But as it is, believing that man has great inherent capabilities, for knowledge, for liberty, for virtue, and for happiness — I lose not my confidence, I observe him as in the struggle of discipline, and in preparation for the period of redemption; and wherever I see ignorance, or slavery, or vice, or misery, I do not despair of a time, when these heavenly faculties shall have achieved their emancipation. I answer, lastly, I maintain the doctrine because it teaches me to honor man. I feel how necessary it is for us in this world of outward show, and where outward show has so much power, that we should have some strong sentiment by which to give our appreciation to those who have no external dazzle with which to attach us: in this world

of grades and inequalities, where rank and wealth, and genius, so continually throw their enchantments about us, we need a sentiment before which rank and wealth and genius are nothing, in regarding those who have them not, and also those who have: and no sentiment can be more powerful, more holy, or more sublime than this, that they are the immortal children of God, destined for his presence, and made after his likeness. Having this faith, then, ignorance, sin, poverty, may come safely before us, without any fear of that infidel contempt with which they are too often treated. Show me then a man, and no matter what his condition, if I be true to this faith, you point me to an object of most solemn interest. Show me the red man of the American forests, or the black man of tropical deserts, and untame and ferocious though he be, he has within him an indelible title to my reverence. His rude and unclothed form enshrines a soul in the image of God, as well as the most polished of his civilized brethren. Show me the veriest serf or slave who seems chained to the soil — the gospel which is equal to bond and free, tells me to behold in him the heir of a glorious inheritance; his title is his nature; it burns in his blood, and it is stamped upon his brow, its appeal is in the fire or moisture of his eye — no power can efface it, for the hand of God has impressed it: — show me even the criminal who seems all but lost to every sense of duty, I am not justified in despairing, much less have I any title to scorn. We dare not despise in the lowest state the child whom God regards — we dare not cast off whom Christ has not rejected, nor disown the brother for whom he died. If we be right-minded, and have any sympathy with the spirit of Jesus, his moral wretchedness should

be his most eloquent appeal. We never know the whole power of Christianity until we have interest in man as the child of God, and revere him as God's image, until we behold the throng around us in relation to their mighty and improvable capacities—until we see in the lowest and the worst, objects of hope and moral influence, with undying souls which no vice or passion should conceal. In this faith the messenger of God may go with confidence to guilt and suffering, and bring with him no mocking offers of blessedness and peace: then may he call on souls to rejoice which were ready to perish in despair, pour the dews of heaven on many a closing hour, and silence the doubts of many a fearing spirit.

LECTURE IX.—BY REV. MR. THOM.

Personality of the Holy Spirit.

There are two modes of proof by which Trinitarians undertake to establish the separate existence of the Holy Spirit as a third person in the godhead. The first mode is by inferences from such passages of scripture as seem to attribute the titles and offices of deity to the Holy Spirit. The second method of proof is by independent considerations of Theology which profess to demonstrate the necessity of a third person in the godhead in order to complete the work of man's salvation.

Trinitarians say, that Scripture both calls the Holy Spirit God, and assigns to Him a work which none but God could accomplish. Now in both these respects we have not a shadow of difference with the Trinitarians.—We believe as firmly and we hope as fervently as they do,

that the Holy Spirit is God, and that the Holy Spirit has connections with our souls which none but our God could hold. We have no controversy with the Trinitarians, when they assert the Deity, and Personality, and Operations of the Holy Spirit. It is a mere piece of controversial dexterity to put these points prominently forward as the true grounds of our difference — and whether designedly or not, an unfair impression is produced against us, by such a mode of statement, as if we were deniers of the deity and agency of the spirit of God — if indeed any meaning could be found in such a denial, supposing we were extravagant enough to make it. To deny the deity of the Spirit of God, would be a proposition as absolutely without meaning as to deny the humanity of the spirit of man. There is only one point of difference between the Trinitarians and ourselves upon this subject, and that is the only point to which their arguments never have a reference. They maintain and we maintain that the Holy spirit is God. They concede and we concede that the expression "Holy Spirit" in scripture frequently signifies that portion of God's spirit which is given to man naturally or supernaturally. They maintain however that the Holy Spirit is, not the one God, but a third person in the godhead — *and here we separate from them*, maintaining that the Scripture evidence for such a distribution of the Godhead among several persons is totally imaginary, and that the theological reasons for such a distribution betray the most arbitrary and unworthy limitations assigned by man to the infinite and spiritual nature of God. * * * It is my conviction that never was so serious a doctrine as that of a third person in the godhead admitted upon evidence so small, and I cannot conceal my strengthened

impression, that it has glided into most minds as an easy consequence from the deity of Christ. Again we avow our belief that the Holy Spirit is God, but we declare that we cannot find any scriptural evidence that he is a separate God (personally) from God our Father, or any theological evidence that He performs a work within our souls, which work may not be performed by God our Father.

Spiritual Influences.

Though not fond of speaking personally of religious experiences, we do declare, and we do know, that the spirit of man may hold communion with the spirit of our Father. Every impulse after holiness is the spirit of God. Every "sighing that cannot be uttered" after the pure, the perfect, and the good, is the spirit of God. Every devotion of our souls to things unseen and eternal, when solicited by things seen and temporal, is of the spirit of God. Every dictate of duty is the spirit of God. Every answer to the prayer of a pure heart is the spirit of God. Every movement of disinterested love is the spirit of God. Every self sacrifice for the sake of justice or of mercy is made in the strength of the Spirit of God. Every inward hope in this world's darkness, and undying trust amid this world's deaths, is an inspiration from Him who is a very present help in the time of trouble, a spiritual intimation from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The spirit that conforms itself to the will of God, that removes from it whatever is alien to his nature, that puts away the defiling breath of the passions, that seeks him by prayer, by efforts of duty, by struggles of penitence, by resistance to all sin, by self-purification and constant converse with His

image in the Christ, that spirit mirrors more and more of the glory of God, feels more and more His power and peace within the soul, and receives of His fulness, and grows in His likeness, throughout eternity.

If there are any to whom all this appears visionary, and who charge the religious mind with mysticism,—we are ready to bear our share of that charge; for thus far we confess ourselves to be Mystics. Yet, so far are we from holding it to be Mysticism, that we are confident that nothing which sense perceives, or thought takes in, is so real, so enduring, so full of life, as this spiritual and imperishable connexion of the soul of man with the Spirit of God. This connexion, whatever may have been the inspiration of peculiar times, we now regard as part of the established providence and operations of our Father's Spirit. He gives of His Spirit, to all who observe the conditions on which He has promised to pour out His Spirit upon them. No pure mind ever sought Him in vain. No erring heart ever turned to Him in penitence, and found no peace. Whenever our holier nature awakes to earnest action, God enters into the soul. Whenever prayer purifies our desires, and rectifies our estimates, and and places great realities in spiritual lights, God is present with us. Every effort to sink our imperfections, and to feel purely, places us within the affinities of His Holy Spirit. There is no miracle in this. God reveals himself to the spirit that assimilates itself to Him, and seeks Him by growing alike to Him. There are no limits to those spiritual communications. He that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it is opened. This is of God's grace; not now of miracle, but of nature. We are His children, and in proportion

as we love Him purely, and follow after Him, He reveals Himself to us. Revealing himself through our spirit, He abides with us forever. Imaged within us in juster proportions, as we reject impurity, and impose the harmony of His will upon all our desires, He guides us into all truth, and causes us to feel within, the blessed intimations of His sympathising Spirit. Correcting our false estimates, and fixing our trusts upon His own great realities, He comforts us amid the shadows of Time and Death, whilst we repose upon a world that cannot be moved, and rely upon the faithfulness of God.

LECTURE X.—BY REV. MR. GILES.

Creeds, the foes of Heavenly Faith.

The title of this lecture is, that creeds are the foes of heavenly faith, and the allies of worldly policy. It is my object to show that this accusation is not lightly or unjustly advanced; and in making good this two-fold charge, the greatest perplexity which attends it, is the multifarious and abundant evidence whereby it can be established.

1. I proceed first to prove them the foes of heavenly faith.

Creeds disqualify the mind for the pursuit of truth. This is my first assertion, and I shall establish its correctness in several particulars. Creeds generate mental apathy and mental dependence, and this is fatal in the very outset. To a spirit of inquiry there is needed an impulsive intellectual activity, and to this activity there is

needed a desire for the thing to be attained, and a sense of its importance. There is no labor without motive, and if in religious belief, the creed has defined before-hand all that is necessary for my salvation, I have no necessity to take any more trouble in the matter. If I am to rest on authority at last, it is just as well for me to be satisfied with it at first — if after toilsome inquiry, at the peril of my soul's eternal peace, the dogmas of the creed are those to which my conclusions must return, I had better be at once content — if I must believe as the Church believes, if I must believe as the Creed says I should believe, if I must believe as the priest declares my hope of heaven requires, if after criticism and research, long and patient, I must arrive at but one exposition of the Bible, it is but wisdom to spare myself from such a pressure of useless labor. But indolence in this case is not merely allowable, it is, in fact, the safest. If to doubt be danger, and if to disbelieve be sin, then the curiosity which stimulates examination may lead me into ruin, whilst implicit submission, that receives all and questions nothing, is a condition of peaceful security. The incitements to mental labor are analogous to those to any other sort of labor; it is that one shall be the richer and the better for it, and that what he acquires he may justly possess. But, if by independent inquiry I may become morally poorer and spiritually worse, if I shall have no right to my own thoughts, and must be despoiled of my convictions, or punished for them, when I have worked them out with the struggle of every faculty, it is exceeding folly to risk the misery and irritation of being torn between my opinion and my creed, conscience forcing me to acquiesce, and reason compelling me to doubt. This view is no

supposition; it is fact. Submission to Creeds and Churches, is the true cause of that wide spread moral torpor in every country where Creeds and Churches have dominion. There is nothing so rare as intelligent, independent religious conviction; and how can it be otherwise, when each leans upon his priest, and the priest gives him ready-made opinions, as they were formed a thousand years ago. There is a general and profound ignorance of the sources of opinion, the history of opinion, of the philosophy of opinion, and of the Bible, both in its letter and in its spirit. Speak to multitudes of religion, in any broad or liberal sense, and it seems to them as if it were an unknown tongue. To have any chance of attention, you must use terms which Creeds have sanctified, you must address them in traditionary phrases, which have the sectarian or sacerdotal currency. This never could have been had religion been recommended as a subject of individual and independent study, leaving the mind free, both in its pursuit and its conclusion. That I have stated nothing but what fact justifies, I may appeal to any one who has considered the religious condition of this country, or of Europe generally, and considered it in every rank of society. I speak not of the Spaniard, who has not yet rid himself from the palsy of the Inquisition, who can go from the prostration of the confessional to scenes of the wildest crime; I speak not of the Italian, that compound of profaneness and credulity, of sin and devotion, who can bow before an image, and with the same hand cross himself, by which a minute before he plunged his stilletto in his fellow-creature's heart. I speak not of our own peasantry, who Sunday after Sunday, walk statedly to church or chapel, and know little more than

that they went there and came back again; I speak not of the fashionable wealthy, who, on this point, are commonly as ignorant as the boor, and choose religion as they choose every thing else, as it happens to be the mode; I pass these by, because it may be said, that pleasure and gaiety leave them no time for study; but I will refer to multitudes who are esteemed devout and serious Christians, whose minds passively receive the mould of their teachers, and to whom religion never presents itself as a system of various thought and of independent examination. Now, this ignorant apathy has bad effects, which are not merely negative; and at the risk of anticipating, I will allude in a few words to one or two of them: it gives stability to every error and corruption, and holds to them with an obstinacy, against which wisdom has no power; it is the very soil in which priestcraft grows darkest and foulest; and the heirarchy in any age or country has never risen to its full stature of lordliness, until the people have lain lowest in torpid submission. And, in addition to this, there is no uncharitableness so inveterate, there is no bigotry so intolerant, as that which this species of character matures, for as it is unable to comprehend an opposite opinion, it is equally inadequate and unwilling to weigh the arguments in its favor, or to estimate the evidence on which it is maintained. Having no conception of independence itself, independence in another appears presumption, if not something worse, and never having imagined that other opinions could possibly be true except its own, to hold any different could only be explained by supposing a want of honesty or a want of grace.

I might dwell upon the fear by which Creeds paralyse the faculties of weak or sensitive natures, by which they

deprive them of all power for calm and deliberate examination, by the fear of being excluded from their Church, by the fear of being discarded by their friends, by the fear of being cast into hell, above all these, by the fear of losing the favor of God, and the friendship of Jesus, and with right and true minds, this is the greatest of all fears. In the midst of so many terrors, it is too much to expect that our weak humanity could be calm,—that it could look with unmoved heart at the appalling indications of so many and dire threatenings, it is like examining a man on the terms of his faith, while the officials of persecution are arranging the faggots or putting screws in the rack. From this topic, disagreeable in any shape, I pass on, and assert, that Creeds are enemies to truth, because, by pre-conception and prejudice, they disqualify the mind to seek or apprehend it.

LECTURE XI.—BY REV. MR. MARTINEAU.

Sin.

To all unperverted minds, the verdict of conscience sounds with a preternatural voice; it is not the homely talk of their own poor judgment but an oracle of the sanctuary. There is something of anticipation in our remorse, as well as of retrospect; and we feel that it is not the mere survey of a gloomy past with the slow lamp of our understanding, but a momentary piercing of the future with the vivid lightning of the skies. Our moral nature, left to itself, intuitively believes that guilt is an estrangement from God, — an unqualified opposition to his will, — a literal service of the enemy; that he abhors it,

and will give it no rest till it is driven from his presence, that is, into annihilation: that no part of our mind belongs to him but the pure, and just, and disinterested affections which he fosters; the faithful will which he strengthens; the virtue, often damped, whose smoking flax he will not quench, and the good resolves, ever frail, whose bruised reed he will not break: and that he has no relation but of displeasure, no contact but of resistance, with our selfishness and sin. * * * * *

Sin, then, in the sight of God and all good men, is to be esteemed an evil, absolutely and everlastingly. We may rally the *whole* power of our nature against it: for it destroys our personal security; it irremediably wounds our brother; and it puts us in dreary alienation from our Father and our Judge. We may let loose our aversion to all that offends the conscience, and without metaphysical hesitancy, visit it with uncompromising hate; for so doing, we are indignant with no instrument of Deity; nor do we fall into any sentiment at variance with his. We may yield, with entire self-precipitation, to the love of whatever things are pure and true and good; never fearing that our affections will become too exclusive for the enlightened children of the Highest. When we look into the darker chambers of our soul, and discern, asleep or awake, the powers of selfishness, malice, jealousy, — we see therein no nursery of discipline, where God presides to train us ultimately well; but the dreadful dwelling of our familiar fiend who wrestles in apostacy with God; — the palace of the penal furies that at once tempt and torture us, a place severed by a whole universe from Heaven; — the inner Hell of our immortal nature, so plenteous in solitary agonies, that the addition of outward flames populous with tor-

mented beings would only refresh us with pity for their woes. The fever of desire, the fires of revenge, the gnawing of remorse, still busy in our immortality; the shame of resuscitated memories; the passionate yearning after strength with the prostrate consciousness of weakness; the strangeness and desolation of empty minds and heated appetites carried to the assemblage of the skies, and gazed on by the pitying eye of a Divine but alienated purity,—Oh! what flames can burn into tenderer seats of anguish than these? And so far from planning and willing the lapse of any into such guilt and suffering, the Great Ruler never ceases to resist to the last, all such delay of his benediction and frustration of his desire. He dwells absolutely apart from all creative contact with the evil which we are bound to abhor: he comes before us as a being unambiguously Holy; not in any ultimate and scarce intelligible way, but in our plain human sense. His name must be reserved as the exclusive receptacle of all the excellence and beauty, the majesty and tenderness, the purity and justice, of which our minds can gather together the ideas. It is no figure of speech, that there is *joy in heaven* over the sinner that repenteth: that part at least of heaven that dwells below and hides itself within our hearts, that portion of God that expresses itself through the sanctities of our nature, yields to our moral restoration not only a ready welcome, but a mysterious help. When fear has performed its proper and only function on a responsible being, — which is, not to create holiness, but to arrest guilt; when it has summoned us, like the prodigal, to ourselves again; when it has brought the mad career to halt, and left us weeping, humbled, prostrate in the dust, crying, "Lord, help us, we perish;" — then the

Divine Spirit dawns on the gloom of our self-abasement, and refreshes us with the delicious light of a new and purer love: instead of the vain striving of an enervated will, the restless beating of mere prudence against the iron bars of corrupt desire, the gates of the soul are burst silently open by some angel affection, and we are free! And shall we not, with most devout allegiance, follow our Divine Emancipator? The great work, which his holy energy is thus ready to carry on within us, he may be discerned conducting every where without us. On the theatre of the universe he is himself engaged to grapple eternally with Evil, and hurl it from the higher portion of his abode. And so, he waits, with his inspiring sympathy, to hail every victory of our free-will: and by all the filial love we bear him, by the generous fear of estrangement from his spirit, by the hope of growth in his similitude, we are summoned to enter the field of moral conflict, — to stir up the noble courage of our hearts, and in the Lord's own might, do battle with the confederate fiends of guilt and woe. There is not elsewhere a combat so glorious, or a trophy so divine.

LECTURE XII. — BY REV. MR. GILES.

Retribution hereafter.

That the dispensations of God are not completed in this life, I think all the moral aspects of things here below make most manifest, and all analogies intimate, if Scripture had not expressly declared, that after death there is to be a more distinct exhibition of the divine government. That the results of character formed in the present life

are to be carried into the future, and to influence it, I conceive our whole nature argues. Our existence, as spiritual beings, is properly connected and continuous; one state prognosticates another; and no two are absolutely distinct and separate. Our spiritual life consists of thought united to thought, and feeling to feeling, one operating on the other, or producing it, of a mysterious chain of consciousness, bound from link to link by successive memories, preserving unbroken the identity of our existence. Manhood is the growth of our youth, and immortality is the growth of our manhood; and the impressions of character pass from one stage to another, along the line of succession and sequence. There are no extremes, except to our outward observation. Looking at one stage of life, and then, after a long interval, seeing in the same person the apparently opposite characteristics, we take those things to be antagonists which are bound together by the inevitable connexion of cause and effect. The dreamer of youth becomes, perhaps, the misanthropist of age; the prodigal of youth, it may be, grows into the miser of age; the principle of action may in each case be the same — vanity or self-love; the passion is identical in principle, and changed only in form, from a change in circumstances. If we should meet an honest rustic in his peaceful fields, innocent and contented; if we should afterwards by accident behold him on a scaffold, it would be to us a seeming and terrible incongruity. But why? The two events are in our minds in naked contrast; could we, however, pierce the Spirit and trace the life of that unfortunate — watch it from the first intrusive evil thought successively dwelt on; from actions slightly wrong, unceasingly reiterated and darkening with every repetition,

until the last deadly volition, and the last awful deed, we should have an analysis of sad consistency and of profound interest. There is something sublime in the reflection, that every human creature who treads the earth and breathes the air, has an inward history, a history unread by every eye but God's; a history of solemn import, that has definite impression on the concerns of the universe, and is to live forever in the annals of eternity.

In ordinary phraseology, we speak of our existence as if death made a chasm in it; but temporal and eternal are but distinctions of imagination; our eternal life commences, and our earthly is but the first stage, the infancy of that awful and endless existence. If I see in our nature that which can survive change, I see that also in it which can take materials of joy and sorrow along with it. The faculties that make our life here must be those which shall make that which is to come. Memory then will be there, which is but the resurrection of our by-gone experience; and whether for good or evil, it will call up the spirits of buried deeds, and as the life has been, will be an angel of heaven or a minister of hell; — imagination, which may have been the nurse of piety or the slave of passion, — intellect, which may have had the glow of the seraph or the malice of the demon: accordingly, then, as these powers have been properly directed or abused, every instinct of our moral nature tells us must be the joy of a righteous soul, or the agony of an evil heart. What treasure will the good man find he has laid up for his immortal life, when the past arises to him in the lustre of a new world: the consciousness of good thoughts and good actions, the peace of assimilation with God, and of union with the best of men: the immortal love of those with

whom he had companioned in his earthly journey, the gratitude of many from whose eyes he had banished tears, and from whose bosoms he had plucked out despair; who has been true to the claims of his nature, and accomplished the work of a disciple of Christ, and a child of God, and a brother of man. On the other side, what are to be his feelings, who awakens in eternity with emotions of isolation and repulsion, condemned in his own conscience, who now discovers he has all to learn which can fit him for the society of noble spirits, whose expanded faculties flash shame and sorrow on his guilty soul, and show him that his whole course was folly: the sensualist, who stultified his reason and profaned his affections: the hypocrite, that toiled but for the outward, betrayed his convictions, and was a living and incarnate lie; before his fellows, a whited sepulchre; before his God, a corrupted mass of falsehood: the profane man, on whose lips prayer rarely dwelt, but to whom cursing and bitterness were familiar: the persecutor, who finds at last that he has hated or tormented others for a falsehood, or a sound: the man of wild ambition, who, despising the true glory which comes from God, and consists in doing right, spreads terror around him, in pursuing a phantom: the worldling, whose spirit was enslaved to those treasures for which he wasted life, and which he has left behind him in the dust.

LECTURE XIII.—BY REV. MR. MARTINEAU.

Greater differences of Opinion among Trinitarians than among Unitarians.

Our reverend opponents affect to have labored under a great disadvantage, from the absence of any recognized

standard of Unitarian belief. "We give you," they say, "our Articles and Creeds, which we unanimously undertake to defend, and which expose a definite object to all heretical attacks. In return, you can furnish us with no authorized exposition of your system; but leave us to gather our knowledge of it from individual writers, for whose opinions you refuse to be responsible, and whose reasonings, when refuted by us, you can conveniently disown."

Plausible as this complaint may appear, I venture to affirm, that it is vastly easier to ascertain the common belief of Unitarians, than that of the members of the Established Church: and for this plain reason, that with us there really is such a thing as a common faith, though defined in no confession; in the Anglican Church there is not, though articles and creeds profess it. The characteristic tenets of Unitarian Christianity are so simple and unambiguous, that little scope exists for variety in their interpretation: to the propositions expressing them all their professors attach *distinct and the same* ideas; — so far, at least, as such accordance is possible in relation to subjects inaccessible both to demonstration and to experience. But the Trinitarian hypothesis, venturing with presumptuous analysis far into the Divine psychology, presents us with ideas confessedly inapprehensible; propounded in language which, if used in its ordinary sense, is self-contradictory, and if not, is unmeaning, and ready in its emptiness to be filled by any arbitrary interpretation; and actually understood so variously by those who subscribe to them, that the Calvinist and the Arminian, the Tritheist and the Sabellian, unite to praise them. Indeed, in the history of the English Church, so visible is the

sweep of the centre of orthodoxy over the whole space from the confines of Romanism to the verge of Unitarianism, that our ecclesiastical chronology is measured by its oscillations. Our respected opponents know full well, that it is not necessary to search beyond the clergy of this town, or even beyond the morning and afternoon preaching in one and the same church, in order to encounter greater contrasts in theology, than could be found in a whole library of Unitarian divinity. What mockery then to refer us to these articles as expositions of clerical belief, when the moment we pass beyond the words, and address ourselves to the sense, every shade of contrariety appears: and no one definite conception can be adopted of such a doctrine as that of the Trinity, without some church expositor or other starting up to rebuke it as a misrepresentation! How poor the pride of uniformity, which contents itself with lip-service to the symbol, in the midst of heart burnings about the reality!

In order to test the force of the objection to which I am referring, let us advert, in detail, to the topics which exhibit the Unitarian and Trinitarian theology in most direct opposition.

When the systems are compared at their corresponding points, the boast of orthodox uniformity instantly vanishes. Since the primitive jealousy between the Jewish and Gentile Christianity, the rivalry between the "Monarchy" and the "Economy," the believers in the personal Unity of God, though often severed by ages from each other, have held that majestic truth in one unvaried form. Never was there an idea so often lost and recovered, yet so absolutely unchanged: a sublime, but occasional visitant of the human mind, assuring us of the perpetual oneness of

our own nature, as well as the Divine. We can point to no unbroken continuity of our great doctrine: and if we could, we should appeal with no confidence to the evidence of so dubious a phenomenon; for if a system of ideas once gains possession of society, and attracts to itself complicated interests and feelings, many causes may suffice to ensure its indefinite preservation. But we can point to a greater phenomenon; to the long and repeated extinction of our favorite belief, to its submersion beneath a dark and restless fanaticism; and its invariable resurrection, like a necessary intuition of the soul, in times of purer light, with its features still the same; stamped with imperishable identity of truth, and, like him to whom it refers, without variablenss or shadow of a turning. Meanwhile, who will undertake to enumerate and define the succession of Trinities by which this doctrine has been bewildered and banished? Passing by the Aristotelian, the Platonic, the Ciceronian, the Cartesian Trinity,—quitting the stormy disputes, and contradictory decisions of the early councils, shall we find among even the modern fathers of our national church, any approach to unanimity? Am I to be content with the doctrine of Bishop Bull, and subordinate the Son to the Father as the sole fountain of divinity? Or must I rise to the Tritheism of Waterland and Sherlock? or, accepting the famous decision of the University of Oxford, descend with Archbishop Whately, to the modal Trinity of South and Wallis? Are we to understand the phrase, three persons, to mean three beings united by "perichoresis," three "mutual inexistences," three "modes," three "differences," three "contemplations," or three "somewhats;" or, being told that this is but a vain prying into a mystery, shall we

be satisfied to leave the phrase without idea at all? It is to the last degree astonishing to hear from Trinitarian divines, the praises of uniformity of belief; seeing that it is one of the chief labors of ecclesiastical history to record the incessant effort, vain to the present day, to give some stability of meaning to the fundamental doctrines of their faith.

The same remark applies, with little modification, to the opposite views respecting the person of the Savior. It is true that Unitarians, agreed respecting the singleness of nature in Christ, differ respecting the natural rank of that nature, whether his soul were human or angelic. But, for this solitary variety among Unitarians, how many doctrines of the Logos and the Incarnation does orthodox literature contain? Can any one affirm, that when the council of Ephesus had arbitrated between the Eutychian doctrine of absorption, and the Nestorian doctrine of separation, all doubt and ambiguity was removed by the magic phrase "Hypostatic union?" Since the monophysite contest was at its height, has the Virgin Mary been left in undisputed possession of her title as "Mother of God?" Has the Eternal Generation of the Son encountered no orthodox suspicions, and the Indwelling scheme received no orthodox support? And if we ask these questions: "What respectively happened to the two natures on the cross? what has become of Christ's human soul now? is it separate from the Godhead like any other immortal spirit, or is it added to the Deity, so as to introduce into his nature a new and fourth element?" shall we receive from the many voices of the church but one accordant answer? Nay, do the authors of this controversy suppose that, during its short continuance, they

have been able to maintain their unanimity? If they do, I believe that any reader who thinks it worth while to register the varieties of error, would be able to undeceive them. If the diversities of doctrine cannot easily and often be shown to amount to palpable inconsistences, this must be ascribed, I believe, to the mystic and technical phraseology, the substitute rather than the expression for precise ideas, — which has become the vernacular dialect of orthodox divinity. The jargon of theology affords a field too barren, to bear so vigorous a weed as an undisputed contradiction.

It is needless to dwell on the numerous forms under which the doctrine of atonement has been held by those who subscribe the articles of our national church: while its Unitarian opponents have taken their fixed station on the personal character and untransferable nature of sin. One writer tells us that only the human nature perished on the cross; another that God himself expired: some say, that Christ suffered no more intensely, but only more "meritoriously," than many a martyr; others, that he endured the whole quantity of torment due to the wicked whom he redeemed: some, that it is the spotlessness of his manhood that is imputed to believers; others, that it is the holiness of his Deity. From the high doctrine of satisfaction to the very verge of Unitarianism, every variety of interpretation has been given to the language of the established formularies respecting Christian redemption. Nor is it yet determined whether, in the lottery of opinion, the name of Owen, Sykes, or Magee, shall be drawn for the prize of orthodoxy.

And if from those parts of our belief, to which the accidents of their historical origin have given a *negative*

character, we turn to those which are *positive*, not the slightest reason will appear for charging them with uncertainty and fluctuation. All Unitarian writers maintain the Moral Perfection and Fatherly Providence of the Infinite Ruler; the Messiah-ship of Jesus Christ, in whose person and spirit there is a Revelation of God and a Sanctification for Man; the Responsibility and Retributive Immortality of men; and the need of a pure and devout heart of Faith, as the source of all outward goodness and inward communion with God. These great and self-luminous points, bound together by natural affinity, constitute the fixed centre of our religion. And on subjects beyond this centre, we have no wider divergences than are found among those who attach themselves to an opposite system. For example, the relations between Scripture and Reason, as evidences and guides in questions of doctrine, are not more unsettled among us, than are the relations between Scripture and Tradition in the Church. In truth, our diversities of sentiment affect far less *what* we believe, than the question *why* we believe it. Different modes of reasoning, and different results of interpretation, are no doubt to be found among our several authors. We all make our appeal to the Records of Christianity; but we have voted no particular commentator into the seat of authority. And is not this equally true of our opponents' church? Their articles and creeds furnish no textual expositions of Scripture, but only results and deductions from its study. And so variously have these results been elicited from the sacred writings, that scarcely a text can be adduced in defence of the Trinitarian scheme, which some witness unexceptionably orthodox may not be summoned to prove inapplicable. In fine, we have no greater

variety of critical and exegetical opinion than the divines from whom we dissent: while the system of Christianity in which our Scriptural labors have issued, has its leading characteristics better determined and more apprehensible, than the scheme which the articles and creeds have vainly labored to define.

The refusal to embody our sentiments in any authoritative formula appears to strike observers as a whimsical exception to the general practice of churches. The peculiarity has had its origin in hereditary and historical associations: but it has its defence in the noblest principles of religious freedom and Christian communion. At present, it must suffice to say, that our Societies are dedicated, not to theological opinions, but to religious worship: that they have maintained the unity of the spirit, without insisting on any unity of doctrine: that Christian liberty, love, and piety are their essentials in perpetuity. We believe in the mutability of religious systems, but the imperishable character of the religious affections; — in the progressiveness of opinion within, as well as without, the limits of Christianity. Convinced that uniformity of doctrine can never prevail, we seek to attain its only good, peace on earth and communion with heaven, — without it. We aim to make a true Christendom, — a commonwealth of the faithful — by the binding force, not of ecclesiastical creeds, but of spiritual wants, and Christian sympathies: and indulge the vision of a Church that "in the latter days shall arise," like "the mountain of the Lord," bearing on its ascent the blossoms of thought proper to every intellectual clime, and withal massively rooted in the deep places of our humanity, and gladly rising to meet the sunshine from on high.

1st Series. No. 167.

THE

SIXTEENTH REPORT

OF THE AMERICAN

UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE ANNUAL MEETING,

MAY 25, 1841.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE & CO. 134 WASHINGTON STREET.
JUNE, 1841.

Price 6 Cents.

I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER, 2 SCHOOL STREET.

SIXTEENTH ANNIVERSARY.

The American Unitarian Association celebrated its sixteenth anniversary on Tuesday evening, May 25, 1841. The members met for the transaction of business at half past six o'clock in the Berry Street Vestry, the Rev. Dr. Nichols, President, in the chair.

The records of the last annual meeting were read by the General Secretary.

The Treasurer's Statement of Receipts and Expenditures was then presented and accepted.

Statement of Receipts and Expenditures of the American Unitarian Association, from May 26, 1840, to May 25, 1841.

RECEIPTS.

Balance in the Treasury, May 26, 1840, per account rendered,		$834 87
From Auxiliary Societies and Subscriptions,	2837 94	
" Life Members,	424 00	
" Donations from Societies and Individuals,	182 88	
" Sale of Tracts,	280 33	
" Subscribers to the General Agency,	5 00	

From Individuals to aid in building Churches in the West,	410 00	
" " to aid in building a Church at Hillsboro', Ill.	60 00	
" " in aid of Unitarian Missions in the West,	30 00	
" " to aid in building a Church at Burlington, Iowa Territory,	20 00	
" " for a set of Communion Ware for Unitarian Society at Quincy, Ill.	30 00	
" American Unita. Association Fund, amount transferred being part of the Interest of the Permanent Fund,	600 00	
		4880 15
		$5715 02

EXPENDITURES.

For Printing and Binding Tracts, and Paper,	996 98	
" Incidental Expenses,	90 06	
" Salary of the General Agent for one year,	1800 00	
" Traveling Expenses of the General Agent,	100 00	
" Rent of Office one year, to July 1, 1840,	200 00	
" Aid in building a Church at Quincy, Ill.	300 00	
" Aid of first Congregational Society in Hillsboro', Ill.	300 00	
" Aid of Unitarian Society in Quincy, Ill.	50 00	
" A set of Communion Ware for Unitarian Society at Quincy, Ill.	30 00	
" Aid of Unitarian Society in Chelsea,	100 00	
" Aid of Unitarian Society in Topsham, Me.	100 00	
" Aid of Rev. Mr. Whitman's Society in Portland, Me.	50 00	
" Aid of Unitarian Society in Saco, Me.	75 00	
" Aid of Unitarian Society in Calais, Me.	100 00	
" Aid of Unitarian Society in Augusta, Me.	100 00	

Missionary Services in New York, New Jersey, Penn., Missouri, and Iowa Territory.

Rev. Mr. Hosmer,	10
" A. B. Muzzey,	10

Rev. F. A. Whitney,	45	
" Mr. Emmons,	90	
" Edward Stone,	310	
" Mr. Farley,	20	
" Mr. Eliot.	20	
" J. P. B. Storer,	25	
	530 00	
Missionary services of Rev. Mr. Osgood, at Manchester, N. H.	10 00	
Missionary services of Rev. Mr. Huntoon, at do.	30 00	
		4962 04
Balance,		$752 98

HENRY RICE, *Treasurer.*

Boston, May 25, 1841.

The following sums have been appropriated by the Executive Committee, but not yet drawn from the Treasury, viz.

For Unitarian Society at Chelsea,	50
" " " Mansfield,	50
" " " Brooklyn, Conn.	50
" " " Saco, Me.	50
" " " Topsham, Me.	75
" " " Hillsboro', Ill.	100
" " " Portland, Me.	100
" " " Gloucester,	50
	$525 00

Boston, June 15, 1841. The subscribers have examined the above account, and find it correctly cast and properly vouched.

Thomas Tarbell,
Jonathan Howe, } *Auditors.*

The following officers for the ensuing year were then chosen.

OFFICERS

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

1841—42,

PRESIDENT.

Rev. Ichabod Nichols, D. D., Me.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon. Joseph Lyman, Mass.
" Jonathan Phillips, Mass.
" Charles H. Atherton, N. H.
" Stephen Longfellow, Me.
Henry Wheaton, Esq. N. Y.
James Taylor, Esq. Penn.
Henry Payson, Esq. Md.
Hon. William Cranch, D. C.
Martin L. Hurlburt, Esq. Penn.
Hon. Samuel S. Wilde, Mass.
" Samuel Hoar, Mass.
Hon. Richard Sullivan, Mass.
Hon. Lemuel H. Arnold, R. I.
Benjamin Bakewell, Esq. Penn.
H. J. Huidekoper, Esq. Penn.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Rev. Artemas B. Muzzey,
" George E. Ellis. } *Directors.*
" Nathaniel Hall,

Rev. Charles Briggs, *General Secretary.*
" Samuel K. Lothrop, *Assistant Secretary.*
Henry Rice, Esq., *Treasurer.*

Agreeably to the 10th Article of the Constitution, the following gentlemen were then chosen COUNCILLORS of the American Unitarian Association.

Francis Alger, Esq.
William T. Andrews, Esq.
Isaiah Bangs, Esq.
N. A. Barrett, Esq.
William Brigham, Esq.
George Bond, Esq.
E. Cobb, Esq.
C. K. Dillaway, Esq.
Hon. S. Fairbanks,
Rev. F. A. Farley,
Albert Fearing, Esq.
Dr. J. F. Flagg,
C. Francis, D. D.
Rev. Ezra S. Gannett,
Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood,
S. Greele, Esq.
Rev. James D. Green,
Rev. E. B. Hall,
Rev. Alonzo Hill,
James Kendall, D. D.
John Lamson, Esq.
Peter Mackintosh, Esq.
Samuel May, Esq.
Rev. Henry A. Miles,
John Owen, Esq.
Francis Parkman, D. D.
Rev. Ephraim Peabody,
Hon. Jonathan Phillips,
Hon. Stephen C. Phillips,
Rev. J. Pierpont,
John Prentiss, Esq.
L. G. Pray, Esq.
Wm. Pomroy, Esq.
Rev. George Putnam,
Rev. C. Robbins,
John G. Rogers, Esq.
Henry B. Rogers, Esq.
Benjamin Seaver, Esq.
W. R. Sumner, Esq.
Rev. C. Stetson,
Hon. R. Sullivan,
Robert G. Shaw, Esq.
Rev. Moses G. Thomas,
Rev. J. W. Thompson,
Alden Bradford, Esq.
James Walker, D. D.
Henry Ware, Jr., D. D.
Rev. Jason Whitman,
Hon. Sidney Willard,
Rev. A. Young.

Rev. Mr. Barrett having declined a re-election, the following vote, presented by Rev. Mr. Hall, of Providence, was passed:

Voted, That the thanks of the Association be returned to the Rev. Samuel Barrett, for his long, faithful, and zealous services as a member of the Executive Committee.

At half past seven o'clock the Association proceeded to the Federal Street Church to attend the public exercises of the occasion. Prayers were offered by Rev. Dr. Francis, of Watertown. After which the Report of the Executive Committee was read by the General Secretary.

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

By the blessing of Providence we are again permitted to assemble on this annual occasion. We have come together from different parts of the country as Christian friends and brethren. Professing a common faith, and animated by the same hopes, we have come to mingle our sympathies, to strengthen each other's hands, and encourage each other's hearts in the cause of truth and holiness.

This is the Sixteenth Anniversary of our Association. And in reviewing the period that has elapsed since its establishment — the opposition it had early to encounter — its first comparatively feeble efforts — and its subsequent prosperity and constantly increasing usefulness, we find much to strengthen our faith in its objects, and to excite us to renewed exertions in the work in which we are engaged. We see new fields of usefulness opening from year to year; learn more of the condition of the churches; and feel more and more the importance of missionary efforts — of promoting the spread of the Gospel — of sending abroad to our less favored brethren in various parts of the country, those truths which we so highly prize — which are the light and the joy of our souls.

The course pursued by the Executive Committee the past year is similar to that of the two or three preceding years. Their great object has been to learn the religious wants of the denomination, and, as far as possible, to supply them. The General Secretary has, accordingly, carried on an extensive correspondence. He has delivered addresses and formed associations; has attended to the Tract department, and to the financial concerns of the Association; and has devoted a portion of his time to traveling and missionary labors.

TRACT DEPARTMENT.

We have been desirous of diffusing abroad a spirit of Christian forbearance and toleration — a disposition among Christians to allow to others the privileges they claim for themselves.

We have aimed to promote religious progress — progress in divine truth, in rightly understanding the pages of revelation; and progress in the Christian life — in spirituality, in love to God, and love to man. And in the selection of our Tracts we have kept these objects in view.

We have published monthly between 5 and 6000 Tracts. They are on the following subjects:

"The Doctrine of the Cross," by Rev. J. W. Thompson. "The one Thing Needful," by Rev. Thomas B. Fox. "The Scripture Doctrine of Regeneration," by Rev. C. W. Upham. "The Power of Unitarian Christianity to Produce an Enlightened and Fervent Piety," by Rev. Dr. Channing. "An Individual Faith," by Rev. George E. Ellis. "How to Spend Holy Time," by Rev. Dr. Ware, Jr. "On the New Birth," by Rev. Frederick T. Gray. "On Prayer," by Rev. John H. Morrison. "Reasons offered for his Opinions," &c. by Samuel Eddy, LL. D. "Man born Upright," by Rev. A. B. Muzzey. "Unitarianism Defined and Defended," from the Liverpool Controversy. These, together with the Annual Report, constitute the 14th Volume of our Tracts.

There has been an increasing demand for our publications. And during the past year they have been very extensively circulated. Applications have been made for them from all parts of the United States. And we have, by request, sent them to Canada, to England, to the Sandwich Islands, and the Society Islands.

By our correspondents we learn that they have been gladly and gratefully received, and have done much good.

BOOK AND PAMPHLET SOCIETY.

The Book and Pamphlet Society has always, in a great measure, supplied its depository with selections of our Tracts, and has acted in concert with the Association. And we are happy to state that, by the recent efforts of its devoted President, and others, it has been revived, and promises to be extensively useful.

AUXILIARY ASSOCIATIONS.

It has been an important object with the Committee to multiply and give efficiency to Auxiliary Associations. The Secretary, has, therefore, devoted much of his time to delivering addresses, reviving and forming such Associations. In several of the Auxiliaries a new interest has been awakened. And they have afforded substantial aid to the Parent Association. Among the largest are those in Mr. Ellis's society in Charlestown, Mr. Miles's in Lowell, Mr. Gannett's in Boston, Mr. Putnam's in Roxbury, Mr. Hall's in Dorchester, Mr. Thayer's in Beverly, and Messrs. Hall and Farley's in Providence, R. I. Many more might be named, which, if not as large as these, have, according to their means, been as efficient and useful.

The number formed and reorganized the past year is twenty-five.

These Associations exert a good influence upon the religious societies in which they are established. We regard them as a means of promoting Christian knowledge and improving the Christian character, as well as a source of encouragement and strength in our missionary efforts.

And we are desirous of seeing them increased, and established in all our societies.

LIFE MEMBERS.

The number added to the list of life members the past year, is eighteen, making in all, three hundred and seventy-four.

They are the following: Rev. J. M. Merrick, Walpole. Francis Appleton, Esq., Dublin, N. H. George Whittemore, Esq., Boston, Richards Child, Esq., Boston, Mrs Mary Jernegan, Edgarton, Rev. Addison Brown, Brattleboro', Vt., Dr. Zadock Howe, Billerica, Rev. J. Crosby, Charlestown, N. H., John R. Manley, Esq., Boston, Miss Mary Manley, Boston, Rev. A. C. L. Arnold, Fall River, George Frost, Esq., Durham, N. H., Miss Charlotte Jones, Enfield, Miss Polly Willard, Lowell, Rev. F. H. Hedge, Bangor, Me., Rev. O. C. Everett, Northfield, Rev. Warren Burton, and Rev. George E. Ellis, Charlestown.

Besides these there are a number who are making themselves life members by paying the sum required for membership in five annual installments of six dollars.

DESTITUTE SOCIETIES.

We have made ourselves acquainted with the condition of the destitute societies of the denomination. And we have deeply sympathized with them. The members of these societies feel sensibly the importance of religious institutions, and are willing to make almost any sacrifices to sustain them. But so limited are their means, that

they are compelled, though commonly with great reluctance, to solicit aid. They call on us for assistance. The appeal is loud. And we do not hesitate to lay their claims before our more favored societies; believing that they will be heard. And we will repeat what we have before stated, that it is the *duty*, the bounden duty, of the denomination to sustain such societies; at least those (and it is our rule to aid only such) which require but temporary assistance to become strong and self-sustaining-societies.

The number of societies which have been aided the past year by the Association, is sixteen.

Of these, ten were in New England, three in the state of New York, and three in the Western States.

MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

The Committee are more and more convinced of the importance of missionary operations. We see many of our faith so situated that they cannot worship God in accordance with their views and feelings — many, especially in the more distant parts of the country, who can seldom hear the voice of the preacher, and are in a measure cut off from Christian influences. Our sympathies are called forth; and we rejoice to supply their wants, — to send out the missionary to "the waste places of Zion" — to carry, as it were, the bread of life to those whose souls are suffering for want of spiritual food. The number of preachers employed by us the past year, is ten. They were good and faithful missionaries. And their labors have been blessed. They have formed societies, established churches, sabbath schools, and Bible classes; and done much to instruct the ignorant and reform the

vicious among the poor. In many places they have awakened a new and deep interest in religion, and have strengthened and comforted our distant brethren.

There is much that is encouraging in the condition and prospects of our new societies at the West. Churches have recently been built at Chicago, Quincy and Hillsboro', Illinois. And if, in addition to funds already raised, some farther aid can be procured from New England, others in that part of the country, will be erected during the coming year. The Committee would express their thanks to the benevolent individuals who have aided in the establishment of religious institutions in the Western States. And they trust that Providence will raise up new friends and benefactors to this philanthropic and truly Christian work.

Besides those which have sprung up during the year in various parts of the country, new societies have recently been formed in Rockford, Ill., Rahway, N. J., Vernon, N. Y., Frankfort, Me., Manchester, N. H., Cabotville, Mass., and Boston.

As the friends of uncorrupted Christianity, we have aimed to diffuse abroad, by our publications and our missionaries, correct views of religion; and thus to meet the wants of many in every part of the country who are dissatisfied with the popular faith, and will never receive it; and who must have a pure and rational religion, or ere long they will have no religion.

As the advocates of religious freedom, we have been disposed to allow to others the privileges we claim for ourselves. But we feel that on this subject we have yet much to do — that some of the great principles of Protestantism — "The sufficiency of the Scriptures," for

instance, and "the right of private judgment" — should be better understood and more sacredly regarded; so that we, and all Christians, can enjoy equal rights and privileges.

Other denominations have in some instances manifested towards us a more tolerant and kindly spirit than formerly. But our religious rights are yet invaded. Whoever has looked at all upon the religious movements of the past year, will see abundant proofs of this in what has come from the pulpit and the press; — in the excommunications of our brethren from the churches of Christ, of which they were exemplary members, and in united efforts among the clergy to exclude individuals of our faith from a participation with others in philanthropic objects, even in the circulation of the holy scriptures.

Let it not, then, be said that our system of faith has done its great work. No. Far from it. It has not done its work here, or any where. It has much yet to do for the truth — the truth as it is in Jesus — for that Christian love, without which faith and hope are vain, and that glorious liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

The Committee are happy to state that, as a denomination, we have great reason at this time to congratulate ourselves on our prosperous condition.

If it be said that we have trials among us, it must be remembered that the same is true of all other denominations. It is believed, however, that we have fewer than others, excepting those on account of our faith; and in them we *glory*, and *will* glory.

If it be said that some of our faith have joined other societies, it must be considered that the number of such is comparatively very few; — so few that they scarcely

deserve to be named — and that although they have changed their churches, they have not essentially changed their faith. No. Where one has changed his faith and gone out from us, ten at least have embraced our views and espoused our cause, as the cause of God. We have from our correspondence seen proofs of this in every part of the country. And besides the many laymen who have embraced our faith, several Trinitarian clergymen of great worth and respectability might be named. Of whom three, educated in a neighboring Theological Institution, have, from a careful and prayerful examination of the Scriptures, become Unitarians, and during the past year have been settled over important societies in this state.

Our responsibility as a denomination is greater than we have words to express. We have much to do in the cause of Christ, and for the advancement of his kingdom — the kingdom of truth and righteousness. We are the guardians of God's holy truth. And it is our duty to make it more known; — to send it abroad to those who are in comparative darkness, and need its light and its guidance. The command of our Savior, "to preach the Gospel to every creature," was by no means confined to his immediate followers. It addresses itself to Christians in every age of the church. It teaches us a most important duty. And we are under strong obligations to make efforts for the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of men.

The more the Committee have known of the spiritual wants of the country, the more deeply have they felt the importance of supplying them. There is a call which comes to us from almost every part of the land, like that in Apostolic times, "Come over to Macedonia and help

us." This call is loud and monitory. It comes from the depths of the human soul, and is, as it were, the spirit of God, speaking to us. Its language is, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Help us to build up the cause of Christ, and uphold the ark of God. Send us your publications and your missionaries, ere the thick darkness of irreligion and sin settle forever upon these fair and broad regions. Send us a pure and reasonable religion, the unclouded light of the sun of righteousness, from the East; and it will shed here a lasting glory, and make glad the hearts of many who can never forget their native New England. Sow here the good seed now, and soon there will be a rich and glorious harvest. Think of us in this our day of weakness, and when our days of strength shall come, we will remember our obligations to do the same for others. Remember *us* who have worshipped with you at the same altars, and we will never cease to remember *you* at our domestic altars, and at those altars which we are now rearing to God on the prairie and by the rivers of the West. And *God* will never cease to bless you.

This cry comes to us as Christians and as Philanthropists. And our hearts must be cold and dead if we do not heed it. "The time is short." Our opportunities of thus blessing our fellow-men are rapidly passing away. *They* will soon be called to *their* account and we to *ours*. The period is near when we shall see more clearly the inestimable worth of the soul; and when the thought of having been instrumental in the salvation of a single human being, will be of more value to us than the world and all it contains.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Rev. Dr. Nichols, President of the Association, on taking the chair, addressed the meeting at considerable length, and awakened a very deep interest; but we are able to give only an imperfect account of his address:

A kind Providence, my friends, has permitted us again to assemble, on an occasion full of interest. The sources of this interest it would be difficult to recount; and many of them I cannot describe. Whenever I come up from the distant place in which Providence has cast my lot, I find many traces of the ravages of time, and signs of our approach to that bourne whence no man returns. The times, since our last meeting here, have been peculiarly affecting as to our secular affairs, and I trust they have not been altogether inefficacious in respect to our moral feelings. I would hope that the acts of Providence in those interesting and affecting secular changes which have taken place, have produced an influence highly profitable to our intellectual and moral nature. The character of the times is calling upon us as an Association, to take to ourselves solemnly a large portion of the admonition to be drawn from the dispensations of Providence during the past year, and to be incited by them to renewed exertion. Our efforts have not been wholly without the blessing of God, and we are loudly called on to continue and increase them. There is one consideration which is most obvious and important — that we should ever carry forward those measures which will afford instruction and improvement to those most in need of them — the young. If our interest in this should ever subside, we shall lamentably overlook our duty.

One distinguishing characteristic of the spirit of Christ-

ianity, as it appears to our minds, is that of fraternal and charitable union. The temper of the age is eminently sensitive as to the prevalence of this spirit. But aside from this, let us reflect upon the fact, that in proportion as men are closely associated for any purpose, they are more liable to feel the dissentious power of human nature, from which differences of opinion are apt to arise among those thus associated. Now, it behoves us, bound together as we are, in a Christian and charitable union, to be on our guard against this disturbing principle, so that it may not operate to divide us. How lamentable were it, if in this Christian union, a spirit of difference and disunion should arise, and at last effect its destruction. We are strong advocates for the religion of the heart and the life, in contradistinction to that of forms — and there is something in the spirit of the present age which gives importance to our distinction in this respect; for, as knowledge is diffused, a utilitarian spirit is the result, and there arises from this an increasing disposition to look for essentials as the true object of search. One inevitable consequence of this is a disposition to simplify religion — either to do away altogether with forms, or to introduce others more congenial with the tone of the doctrine. There is, in effect, a disposition to introduce new forms, to speak evil of dignities, to carry to an extreme everything that is practical in religion; and this has given occasion to some, for great alarm. But what cause is there for alarm — and what is our true position in respect to this disposition to regard the practical and essential, in opposition to the ceremonial in religion? I conceive, brethren, that we have cause neither for alarm nor apprehension, nor concession. We know that religion can no

more exist without ceremonies than man can breathe the oxygen of the atmosphere without the concomitants with which nature has associated it; that the truly essential or useful forms of religion will be done away, and religion itself destroyed with them — I conceive we have no reason to apprehend. There are two powerful causes to prevent it. The first is a spirit of enlightened piety, and the second, a strong disposition to resist. We never need fear that the stability of our religion will be done away, or her institutions essentially modified. But can we gather no lesson from this character of the age? Truly there is a lesson which we may learn. We are not to concede everything to forms, nor seek to devise changes in them, or introduce new ones, but we must strive to make a more faithful use of those that exist. The disposition is to mistake the power of forms. We should come to the real vitality of religion. The great want is moral power — and this want will be satisfied, if we apply to God for his blessing.

A louder call is sounding in my ears, to apply to heaven for that, at present ill-defined and ill-ascertained something which is felt to be necessary for the good of the world. I feel it to be necessary to throw more life into our forms, more vitality, more power into our works. It has appeared to me, and, I doubt not also, to yourselves, that if there is any demand of society which stands forth preëminently as of a strictly moral nature, it is for practical reform. The community evidently needs exertion to produce this practical reform; and the character and demands of the age speak with peculiar effect to us, because our favorite doctrine is that religion lies more in making men wiser and better, than in forms or creeds;

in making men fear God and keep his commandments. Is there then no danger of our overlooking this view ourselves? It may not be according to our taste or our feelings, our principles or our practice, to make our pulpits a scene of polemic warfare — but does it thence follow that we should not preach religion, and true religion? Most certainly not. We should go into our pulpits with the sole intent and purpose of benefiting the morals and promoting the spiritual good of our hearers, and not with a desire for show or a regard for own reputation.

One further consideration. We have always been fervent advocates for a spirit of love. We have taught that true religion is the spirit of love to God and to man; we have dwelt much upon the declaration of our Lord—"A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." We are happy to believe that this is increasingly the spirit of the age, and we need not ask what benefits would follow from its diffusion. Can any thing be more distinctly marked than the preëminent glories of this moral philanthropy? Are not our hearts warmed towards it, when we see what results it is eliciting? When, in the language of Scripture, we say to our fellow-being — "Come up, my brother, from the ways of sin and destruction"— we are not speaking to blocks of wood or stone, but to hearts possessing feelings responsive to our own, and entertaining sentiments which will do justice to our motives. There is, I feel disposed to say, another lesson we may profitably consider. Nothing more clearly marks the progress of a grand moral movement than particular and statistical observations of the effect of any given cause; and this shows us that we should go into the particulars of necessary reform, and not rest too much

on generalities. By the latter course, indeed, the progress of evil may in some degree be interrupted, but will the condition caused by its previous progress be ameliorated? From age to age this course has been pursued—men have stood up and denounced sin in general — but now we begin to employ a different process; to descend from generals to particulars. I doubt not that if every pulpit in the land would look to the cure of any one sin that might come under its immediate observation with more force than others — much more good would be produced than has hitherto been obtained. It is the custom now in many places to turn the chief attention to intemperance as the great source of misery; and I say not that much good has not resulted from this. But were we to expend similar efforts upon other sins, and present each in as strong a light, might we not witness movements that would astonish us? I am unable to see why all human misery should be represented as existing solely in connection with one single sin; reason dictates no such conclusion. In short, the great lesson of the day to us is, that we be faithful in our exertions for the happiness and virtue of mankind — that we hold up to man for his imitation the holy example of our Lord and Savior — that we count not our lives as for ourselves, but for the human race. Let us feel called upon to exhibit a spirit of self-sacrifice — to demonstrate a true moral courage — to make manifest that if we are sometimes guided by prudence, it is not through fear. We shall take but little satisfaction from the revision of our course in the ministry of the Gospel, if we entertain not a spirit of bold determination in the cause of philanthropy. O that I had eloquence to express what I feel in my mind on this subject — to make

others feel themselves called upon from God, to use their powers for the salvation of the age in which they live! O that we may be able to satisfy the demand of our fellow men, when we hear them calling for something more and something better than they have already received! O that we may all use that independence with which God has endowed us, and, if need be, go forth as moral martyrs in his cause. What laurels should we win from our fellow-creatures — but ah! what are they to that crown of thorns which he wore, who died to save the world!

But I have occupied too much of your time. Let us feel these things in our own hearts; let the love of the cross inspire our souls; let us count nothing as a burden to ourselves, from which may result the moral good of our fellow-men. No meed, that the world can give, will be comparable to the feelings of our own bosoms, if we do this. And we have the promise of Almighty God, that we shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven forever and ever! Brethren, let me leave the subject to your prayers. We cannot discharge our duty as Christian ministers, except we permit the spirit of Christ's love to burn in our souls, as it burned in his for the salvation of the human race.

Rev. Mr. Hill, of Worcester, rose to move the acceptance of the report, and said:

Mr. President — I was much impressed by the remarks which have just fallen from the chair, for they fully accord with a train of thought which was just passing through my own mind. This morning, sir, I read a paragraph in one of the daily journals, headed with these words, "Increase of Crime," and one can scarcely take

up a newspaper without reading in almost every column, the record of a new form of crime and wo. It is not crime now of which there is complaint — dressed in rags — to be hunted in the narrow lanes — to be found in the wretched hovels of your city — but crime perpetrated by men of intelligence, who were but just now respected and honored — occupying places of influence and trust. There is an unexampled devotion to gain, and a recklessness of the means by which it is acquired. An English traveller has said that he has never been among the people, with whom prevailed as they do here, the active, undisguised principles of selfishness. That they have grown into máxims, and influence the conduct day by day. Whether this remark be founded in fact or not, certain it is, our people to an unexampled degree, are devoted to the outward and perishable. Our freedom, and the vast field of exertion around us, has given a new activity to the spirit of enterprise. These are unfavorable tendencies. The danger of an all-absorbing worldliness. And are we without some outward manifestations of the reality of this spirit — the existence of these apprehended effects! Allusion has been made to a great and growing irreverence for things sacred and venerable. The value of institutions has been called in question, which have hitherto been regarded as inviolable — rites and ordinances are falling into disuse, once deemed necessary aids to a higher religious advance — and a respect for the laws, the magistracy, and the ministry, has evidently declined. Allusion has been made to these, and it has been said we have nothing to fear. But, sir, when I remember how much the character and conduct of a people depend upon their sentiments, I am not without my apprehensions.

You have not forgotten the striking fact related in Roman history, that when the northern barbarians entered the queenly city in triumph, flushed with victory, they were ready for rapine and plunder — but as they passed along the broad avenues, formed by magnificent porticos, decorated with gold and purple, and ornamented with statues of exquisite workmanship — they saw on either side, sitting in ivory chairs, immovable as marble, the venerable forms of heroes and magistrates; and this simple people, taught in their native forests, to reverence the aged, paused with respect, and their hand was stayed from violence. But the moment this feeling began to subside, and acts of rudeness were perpetrated, then the work of destruction commenced, which was not terminated till the ruin of the city was complete. Sir, I fear this spirit of irreverence — I see in it much to awaken our serious apprehensions. We must find for it a remedy, or a retribution awaits us, heavier than ever fell on any people. And what is this remedy? What is the principle with which the wants of the times must be met and contended?

I answer, the religious principle — the truth in love — the power of gentleness and kindness, which is the leading principle of Unitarian Christianity — for the defence of which we are associated. Is there a mightier energy than is found in this? Old John Elliot used to say, that "with prayer and love a man may do any thing," and his whole life was a bright exemplification of the principle. With this alone, he went out into yonder forest, and committed himself to wild, untutored savages. Not a tomahawk was raised against him — not an injury was inflicted on him. They were as clay in his hands, and were

moulded to his will. And what is it that is giving the cause of Temperance at this time, its astonishing triumphs? Its leading advocates evince no uncommon talents — they make no display of learning — they have no remarkable powers of original eloquence. Yet enter the mighty assemblies which they call together, and the congregation seem as under a spell. Hearts hardened by long indulgence are melted — countenances swollen by long habits of intemperance, are bathed in tears, and a conquering energy is at once imparted to the feeble and fitful resolution. And why is this, and whence does it come? It is because the truth learned by long and bitter experience, is uttered in love, out of a profound respect for human nature, and sympathy for those who have so terribly abused it, because of the might of those very principles for which we are contending.

But, sir, I have been anticipated by the chair in so many of the remarks I intended to make, that I shall be very brief. I have only to say, as another inducement to renewed effort, that those generous views of truth, to promote which we are associated, have power to soothe as well as excite. We live in times when the sustaining power of religion is peculiarly needed. It is a period of great social and domestic changes. Events have occurred, that have touched nearly every bosom. There have been reverses of fortune — the blighting of earthly hopes. All over the land the hard earnings of years have been swept away, and families without number, have been reduced from affluence to want. And there have been sorrows which the heart only knoweth, and with which the stranger cannot intermeddle. There have been disasters by sea and by land, and sudden and

wide-spread bereavements. Sir, need I speak here of the soul's necessities and wants? This morning, I stood in a country grave-yard. There was a glory in the scene around me. There was not a cloud in the sky. The surrounding orchards were bursting forth in beauty, and were vocal with the songs of joy. And how could the human heart fail to sympathize with the general gladness? At that early hour there was a mother watering a rose-bush, that shaded the grave of her child, a fair girl of fourteen. Years had passed since her death — seasons had come and gone, and the world had been lavish in its favors. But the rooted sorrow remained in the heart; its griefs were still fresh, and no earthly power can remove them. Tender recollections spring up anew, and at the sight of the grave, the fountain of tears flows again. And what is there to meet such wants as these — soothe these sorrows and heal these wounds? My brethren, know that there is nothing but our common Christianity, simply and faithfully administered, and heartily received — Christianity in its common truths, stripped of all sectarian peculiarities, and all narrowness. How often have we seen it meeting the sorest troubles of humanity — lighting with a smile the sorrow-stricken countenance — bringing peace to the agitated bosom. But the other day, a worthy lady, whose home is in the far West, came among us. She lived in the midst of a Christian community — churches were all around her — but afflicted beyond the ordinary lot, she sought and found the comforts of our religion. But she could obtain no admission to the table of our Lord — she could obtain no one who would baptize her children. Here, among ourselves, she found a welcome; and when I saw her religious sen-

sibility, and heard her expressions of gratitude, I thanked God for the free and generous spirit of religion which we are permitted to cherish. Sir, I have again and again, as I have no doubt my brethren have, been called to the bed-side of members of other congregations and churches, to administer to them the consolations of religion, in the hour of sickness and death. I have always found them relying, not on the peculiarities of their faith, but on the common truths. I was sent for by an interesting young man, who was wasting away by a slow consumption. His mind was clear and strong — his religious sensibilities were tender — his affections were deep and generous. He wished me to attend him during his sickness. And why, I asked, did you at such a time, send for a Unitarian minister? "Sir," said he, "the realities of life are now before me. The peculiar doctrines of my sect seem to me of less and less value — with the solemnities of death in view, I find myself sympathizing more with you than with those with whom I have worshipped—come to me while I live." And so he wasted away, his trust in the simple truth more firm; and at last went to his rest, as gently and sweetly as a child sinking into its slumbers.

Mr. President, I move the acceptance of the report.

Rev. Mr. Waterston then offered the following resolution: —

Resolved, That while we cherish an increasing love for the great principles of the religion of Jesus, we should endeavor to show our faithfulness, by the consistency of our lives, and by unwearied effort for the good of others.

There is indeed a mighty work to be done, and we

trust there is a mighty spirit by which to accomplish it. Christianity is to renovate and regenerate the world. She is to do it through human agency. Through the instrumentality of her children. There are times when the soul will float in abstractions. But a true thought always seeks to develope itself into an act. Christianity is not satisfied with mere ideas. She rests not in theory and speculation. She would see them born into life. She calls for beneficence. She requires generous labor. She demands philanthropic effort. The Christian spirit is a missionary spirit. It says, do good. It makes this a test, By their fruits ye shall know them. Let then the present be filled with holy deeds and the future will shine with immortal hopes.

Knowing the stupendous revolutions yet to be effected by Christianity, in extirpating sin, and awakening devotion, we, as disciples of the Great Master, are united to aid in its accomplishment.

What then are the thoughts that should animate us, and the ends we should keep in view?

May we not reply — God and God's image! God, the everlasting Father. Man, created in His likeness, but too often enslaved by appetite and corrupted by sin. Christ, the all-perfect, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person!

Here, then, we stand. The infinite above, around, and within us, ever ready to impart to our spirits life and light. Our first duty is with Him, to kindle within our souls a living sense of his presence: not to look upon Him merely as a subject of philosophical speculation and controversial debate, but as the object of our warmest love and profoundest adoration. The very life of our life and

soul of our souls. Nearer and dearer to us than our best friend. The Father of spirits — the hearer and answerer of prayer, with whom we may hold intimate communion, and from whom divine influences perpetually flow. Our first duty is with God. To look upon him with a fervent holiness, a living piety. Then will He be our shield and our strength.

And how shall we know God, but through Christ? — Christ, the Revealer of His laws, the Herald of His grace, who, heaven-commissioned, was sent for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the world; who came that He might make known the Father, and gather in one the children of God that are scattered abroad, to establish one everlasting kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness. Was not the light of the knowledge of the glory of God manifested in Jesus with a divine radiance, a super-human splendor? When we would know of God, of our souls and our souls' salvation, to whom should we go but unto Christ? He has the words of eternal life. Truly to see him, is to see the Father; in spirit and in purpose they are one.

As Christians, then, we labor for God and for Christ, this is a thought to animate, an end to keep in view.

But our duty stops not here. God and God's image — Christ is the divine image — but there is another image, broken and defaced. The soul created in the likeness of Jehovah, but untrue to itself, degraded by selfishness, its capacities dwarfed, its powers paralyzed, its immortal hopes too often blackened and blasted by sin. We should weep over its follies and its frailties, and strive for its redemption. For this Christ came. This was his glorious mission, for this he lived and for this he died. He was

the great deliverer, the revealer of spiritual life, the proclaimer of pardon, the Savior from sin. He has left the church as his witness. Every true church is a witnessing church. His disciples are the proclaimers of his gospel. They spread the glad tidings. They extend the borders of his kingdom. By self-devotion, by philanthropic effort, by example and by precept, they carry on the work. This is a Christian's mission, as did the master, so do the disciples. They love God and they love man. They pray that God's will may be done on earth even as it is done in heaven, and they know that before the world can be thus blessed, truth must be diffused and spiritual life awakened: and this, under God, through human instrumentality. By the power of the gospel we must redeem mankind.

Now how can we redeem mankind? — We reply, by Christianity.

And what is Christianity?

It is the religion, the laws, and the life, revealed by and through Christ.

But men differ as to the religion, the laws, and the life, revealed by Christ. Some tell us they have settled it at the Council of Trent, and others that they decided at the Confession of Augsburgh. Some dash these aside and place solemnly before us the Westminster Assembly, and others, indignant at this, thrust forward, as the law and gospel, the Thirty nine Articles.

What then is Christianity? Shall we go to the men of Augsburgh, or Westminster, or Trent, and take their words, or shall we go to Christ? We reply, Christianity is to us what we find it, and not what others find it. Their views may appear as truth to them, but they cannot ap-

pear as truth to us, unless they become our views. The only way we can preach Christ is to preach what Christ taught. And we must come to an understanding as to what Christ taught, by going to Christ for ourselves.

Our work, then, is to extirpate sin, to renovate the soul, and to lead men to Christ, and to do this, we must do it by Christianity; and Christianity is to us, what we, in our honest convictions believe the New Testament to teach. Here then come our own religious views. We are united, not as a mere sect, but as fellow Christians. We labor not for a party — but to renovate and regenerate man. We preach and promulgate our doctrinal views not as an *end* but as a *means*. Our end is to convert, to purify, to elevate and ennoble the soul, and if we are to do this by Christianity we must do it by what we think Christianity to be.

And what do we consider the most essential thing in Christianity to be? Not mere speculations — but principles which affect character. Love, justice, humility, purity, devotion, the *life* manifested by Christ; — a holy life, springing from holy principles.

And are we to understand that no other disciples have these but ourselves? God forbid. We look with joy upon the writings of the mighty men who have lived — whose characters are cherished and who have stood like pillars of adamant in the churches, the Scougals, the Fenelons, the Laws and the Baxters, and we see that that which makes these works live is what we also love. That their conquering power over the mind is in their true expression of those fundamental principles which we hold in common.

We go among the living, and we inquire what it is that

gives power to the preacher and the philanthropist — and we find the same fact. It is not technicalities, it is not dogmas. It is the utterance of those same views which we value. Their creeds are appendages. Souls are melted by love and purified by principles. In churches where many are awakened to holiness, it is a sense of sin, a love of goodness, the sinlessness and self-sacrifice of Christ, the parental tenderness of God, which is the moving power. In other words, it is the same thing with others as with ourselves. But while true vitality among all denominations rests in principles, many connect and interweave with these erroneous opinions, dark views, through which light may indeed glimmer, but without which it would burst forth in heavenly radiance.

The views which are connected with principles, views of the human mind and the divine mind, may throw sunlight, or gloom, over the Christian's pathway.

We believe our own views are true, or we should abandon them. We believe they are true, and therefore, God helping, we will diffuse them. We believe they are true, and worthy of God. They are Christ's, and therefore divine. They are evangelical. They are soul-quickening and soul-saving. We will bear faithful witness to their power. We will cherish them as our life, we will extend them to the ends of the earth. We will do so because they are to us Christianity.

Look at the pamphlets published by this Association. They go forth like the messengers of God, spreading liberty, holiness, and love. They contain the honest expression of free minds. The convictions of devout hearts on the sublimest themes. The pages of those books may be stereotyped, but the thoughts are not. They are the re-

sult of individual research and individual faith derived from the oracles of God, and flowing forth like a fresh sparkling fountain. We may take separate tracts and meet views with which we might not altogether agree, but if we will take them together, we shall find rich treasures of thought, noble illustrations of a fervent, yet catholic spirit, learning without pedantry, spirituality without mysticism. The outpourings of a true holiness, profound in simplicity, and convincing from a perfect accordance with the Word of God, and the deepest wants of the soul. These books are as a spiritual armory filled with heaven-tempered weapons. Is it not our duty to let the public mind have free access to these volumes? If they are read with candor and a spirit of prayerful sincerity, they will pour light over our land and awaken thousands to piety. We have seen their influence among the poor and afflicted, they impart knowledge to the inquiring mind, and the balm of comfort to those who are in sorrow. Would that these books were in the library of every University — of every parish, of every Sunday School, and of every private family. Not simply a few of the disconnected pamphlets, but the twelve volumes, that they might be ready at all times for perusal. Would that the separate tracts could be scattered like seed to every wind. We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to truth. We owe it to God. We should lay these pages before the great mass of the people, we should write, and labor, and pray, and preach, until society is impregnated with Christian truth. We should work for the destitute and the degraded, we should enter the cell of the convict, penetrate the dark hovels of penury, and let these soul-stirring views of God and of Christ, of the soul and salvation be

made known. Let the millions understand them and they will love them, and through them be brought to God.

We owe it to the truth. Thousands shun the truth, not because they dislike it, but because they misapprehend it. They associate with it false ideas, and shrink not from it, but from the imagination they connect with it. Christianity from its earliest days has labored under this disadvantage. The Jews misapprehended Jesus. Even his disciples were slow to understand the spirituality and greatness of his mission. Old prejudices cling with a tenacious grasp; they shudder at the phantoms of their own creation. Thus many have dark and fearful associations with words which to us are bright with heavenly glory. If they could see them as we see them they would tremble no longer. They denounce, in fact, not our views, but their own false ideas. Before John Huss was burned, he was decorated with fantastic garments and surmounted with a painted cap, all fancifully representing a demon. The multitude shrank aghast from so strange a spectacle, little conscious that they were looking upon a man of God, a noble martyr of holy zeal and unblemished virtue. Thus with fear did they burn his body, and threw, with triumph, his ashes into the Rhine. We owe it to God that the painted cap should be taken off, and truth be seen as she is.

But erroneous impressions are gradually passing away. Men of reflection in all quarters are modifying their views. Words are changing their meaning. New explanations are given to old terms. The literature of the country manifests it. The Theological Seminaries of all denominations manifest it. Individuals are here and there protesting, but they protest in vain. They cry

aloud, but their voice is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Technical phrases are of little importance if the ideas have slipped out from under them. Narrow words may cover growing thoughts, and the enlarged thoughts will in time find true expression. All that we ask is that the truth as it is in Jesus should be felt in its simplicity, disconnected from the traditions and theories of men. The traditions and theories of men must fall, but truth is indestructible. The principles which we cherish are growing up all around us in silence and in power. Many who know nothing of our books, have derived kindred views from personal reflection, and the oracles of God. Many have the same ideas dimly shining in their minds, and could they but see some of the masterly expositions of our Biblical Critics, some of the profound utterances of our holy men, they would find their own views more brightly reflected, and leap to embrace what until now they had sought in vain ; — as the myriad blossoms of spring remain folded during the cold east winds, but burst open at the breath of the sweet south, so there are countless numbers who hold, almost unconsciously, our views, and are silent under the chilling prejudices of party, but who, if they could only feel the warm breath of sympathy and love, would expand, and manifest to the world the beauty of those thoughts, which until now had been slumbering unseen in the depths of their own souls. As far as our principles are true, their progress will be onward. Those who should seek to stop them in their mighty workings would be as Jeremy Taylor has well said, "Like one who should put his shoulder to the ground to stop an earthquake." Retarded they may be, but, in their eternal progress, never, never can they be

turned back. Sooner might men hope to stay in their courses the flaming constellations of heaven. As far as they are true they are God's, and are destined to enlighten and evangelize the world.

Rev. Mr. CLARKE, (formerly of Louisville, Ky.) remarked, that he was almost a stranger to this Association, not having had an opportunity to be present at its meetings for eight years. Yet not altogether a stranger, for where Christians meet together, no Christian can feel himself a stranger. In the "household of faith" we may always feel ourselves at home.

It seems to me, said Mr. C., that we have reached a crisis in the Unitarian Reform. This Reform was based upon two foundations — not one, but two — upon an intellectual and a spiritual want. Unitarianism was in the first place opposition to certain doctrines. The intellect was dissatisfied with the doctrines of the Trinity, Atonement, Depravity, &c., as commonly received, and protested against them. Unitarianism has been called a *negative* system, and so far as it has peculiar doctrines, I admit that it is a negative system. But underlying these doctrines, penetrating and animating them, were PRINCIPLES, and those not negative, but eminently positive. The first of them was an assertion of MENTAL FREEDOM. We demanded the largest liberty of thought for the individual mind. Do not think that this demand springs only from a love of lawlessness and a dislike to restraint — that it is only a wilful determination to believe what we choose, and no more. No, sir, its root is deeper, its impulse nobler. It is an assertion of the inborn worth of the individual soul. It is a demand that the individual mind

shall not be an appendage, an echo, a blind follower of some other mind, which does all its thinking for it. It declares that men are not to be driven in droves, herded in masses, stamped with the peculiarities of some creed, but that it is the duty and right of every mind, however humble, to approach the beautiful form of Truth, and gaze at it with its own eyes. An inspiring thought, which rouses the enthusiasm of the human heart, wherever it is boldly spoken! Hence the love and reverence of mankind wait on the champions of liberty in all ages, cluster round them, battle for them, and when they fall, water their graves with sincere tears. Thus men go on a pilgrimage to the plain of Lutzen, where a single stone was raised with the inscription — "Here fell Gustavus Adolphus, fighting for *freedom of spirit*" — and to the humble grave, on the banks of the wide-winding, many-islanded Susquehannah, where softly rest, amid the rich pastures of Pennsylvania, the remains of him, whom Coleridge called

"Patriot, and Saint, and Sage,"

who was driven from his own land by dark bigots, to find a peaceful home and tomb in ours. Wherever these champions of mental freedom sleep, they sanctify the soil.

"Their memory wraps the dusky mountain,
Their spirits sparkle in the fountain,
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Rolls, mingling with their fame, forever."

I never have occasion to lift my voice in this house, sir, without thinking of that voice which has so often been raised here in behalf of freedom — a voice never hushed

when the cause of human liberty required that it should speak — never silent because on the side of the oppressor there was power, and one might become *unpopular* by speaking — a voice raised for the slave, at a time when it was not considered respectable here to say anything for him. And now, sir, we hear that this same voice has been raised to rebuke the worship of mammon even where mammon has raised its stateliest temple; a temple rivaling in external grace the Grecian Parthenon, but dedicated, alas! not to the ideal wisdom of Greek mythology, the Virgin Minerva, but rather to Mercury and Plutus, the gods of gain and fraud. I do not think it wrong, even in the house of God, to remember gratefully the name of such a servant of God and of freedom. One other instance besides, we have lately had, sir, to show us that all among us are not dead to the call of freedom. We have seen one, who has filled the highest office of honor which our nation can bestow, descending from it, or rather ascending to the yet higher duty of pleading in the halls of justice for the cause of the helpless African. After his great public services shall have faded from the memory of the nation, this action will be freshly remembered to his honor.

Mr. Clarke then spoke of the other positive principles of the Unitarian Reform, as the principle of Progress, and making Religion a matter of Practical life. He then intimated that the question now before us was, which we preferred, to retain our principles or our opinions — whether we were willing to modify our opinions for the sake of progress, or determined to resist progress rather than alter our opinions. We have been singing the praises of toleration and charity, and now we are likely

to be called on to say whether we were in earnest or whether we only wished to be tolerated ourselves. Differences of opinion are now springing up in our own ranks. Are we ready to tolerate them or not? For himself, Mr. C. expressed a determination to hold fast to the great principles of the reform, no matter what became of the opinions. There were only three paths open to us — to go back to Orthodoxy — to stand still — or to go forward. Back to Orthodoxy we cannot go — for Orthodoxy, in the sense of uniform doctrines, does not now exist. What was Orthodoxy in one place is heresy in another. The Orthodoxy of Andover is the heresy of Princeton. The Orthodoxy of New England is "another gospel" in Kentucky. Latitude and longitude make little difference as regards truth, but a great deal as regards Orthodoxy. For one, I am glad to study the writings of those who are called Orthodox, listen to their sermons, and adopt whatever I can find that is true and good in their system. But I cannot adopt any particular system as a whole, for I find them all fluctuating. Go back, we cannot — stand still, we cannot — we must go forward. And I, for one, have no fear of the result. I go for Liberty, for Progress, for a more practical, more simple, less formal Christianity.

OFFICERS

AND

COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL.

The annual meeting of the Council of the Association was held at the Berry Street Vestry, May 27th, 1841. Hon. J. G. Rogers was chosen Chairman, and Rev. J. W. Thompson, Secretary of the Council for the ensuing year.

The Chairman then nominated the following gentlemen for the several Committees.

On Finance — George Bond, Esq., Samuel Greele, Esq., Rev. S. K. Lothrop, N. A. Barrett and Samuel May, Esqrs.

On Missions — Rev. Dr. Ware, Jr., Rev. Dr. Parkman, Rev. A. B. Muzzey, Albert Fearing, Esq., Hon. Richard Sullivan.

On Parishes — Rev. Dr. Walker, Hon. Jona. Phillips, Rev. E. S. Gannett, Rev. Samuel Barrett, William Pomeroy, Esq.

On Tracts — C. K. Dillaway, Esq., Rev. George Ripley, Rev. E. Peabody, Rev. Dr. Francis, Lewis G. Pray, Esq.

On the Anniversary — Rev. Alexander Young, Rev. Charles Briggs, William Brigham, Esq., Hon. Sidney Willard, Rev. Alonzo Hill.

After the Addresses, the Report was accepted, and the meeting was closed by singing the "Dismission Hymn."

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

1. The name of this Association shall be THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

2. The object of this Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity throughout our country.

3. Unitarian Christians throughout the United States shall be invited to unite and co-operate with this Association.

4. An annual subscription of one dollar shall constitute a person a member so long as such subscription shall be paid; and a subscription of thirty dollars shall constitute a person a member for life.

5. The officers shall be a President, fifteen Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, who shall have the care of all the business and interests of the Association under the control of the Executive Committee, an Assistant Secretary who, in case of the absence or sickness of the General Secretary, shall perform such duties of a Recording and Corresponding Secretary as may require immediate attention; a Treasurer and three Directors.

6. The Directors, Secretaries, and Treasurer shall constitute the Executive Committee, who shall meet once in each month, and shall have the direction of the funds and operations of the Association.

7. An annual meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Executive Committee shall deem advisable, of which due notice shall be given, and at which officers shall be chosen, reports be made, and any other business be transacted, which may come before the Association.

8. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur among the officers between any two annual meetings.

9. Any amendments of this Constitution shall be proposed at one annual meeting, and may be accepted at the next anniversary, if two-thirds of the members present be in favor of such amendments.

10. There shall also be a Council of the Association consisting of not less than twenty-five, nor more than ———— members, to be nominated by the presiding officer, and chosen by a hand vote at the annual meeting, whose duty it shall be, whenever it is necessary, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, to consider and determine what further measures may be taken to increase the usefulness of the Association, by what means they may be carried into execution, and in what manner funds can be provided for the purpose. The Council shall hold a stated annual meeting on the Thursday succeeding the annual meeting of the Association, at four o'clock, P. M. The Executive Committee shall call special meetings whenever they shall deem necessary, or at the request of any five members of the Council; and twelve members shall constitute a quorum. The powers of the Executive Committee with regard to all matters not acted upon by the Council are to remain the same as heretofore.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, September, 23, 1826, as amended March 30, 1830.

Resolved, That every member of the Association be entitled to one copy of every tract *of the first and second series*, published by the Association *during the year for which his subscription is entered.*

Vote of the Executive Committee, passed January 4, 1826.

Voted, That no society be recognised as auxiliary to this Association, the terms of subscription to which are less than those required in the Constitution of this Association.

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, June 20, 1833.

Voted, That the 4th article of the Constitution be so construed, that any one who shall pay thirty dollars for the General Agency of the American Unitarian Association, either at once, or by annual instalments within five years, shall be considered a life member.

CLERGYMEN MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

The following Clergymen have been made members for life of the American Unitarian Association, by the donation of thirty dollars or more, principally from ladies of their respective societies.

Abbot, Abiel.
Alden, Seth.
Alger, Horatio.
Allen, Joseph.
* Andrews, William.
Arnold, A. C. L.
* Bancroft, Aaron, D. D.
Barrett, Samuel.
Bartlett, John.
Barry, William.
*Bascom, Ezekiel L.
Bates, Reuben.
Bellows, Henry W.
Bigelow, Andrew.
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Briggs, Charles.
Brooks, Charles.
Brooks, Charles T.
Brown, Addison
Buckingham, Edgar
Burton, Warren
Channing, Wm. E., D. D.
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Clarke, Samuel.
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Colman, Henry.
Cunningham, Francis
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Dewey, Orville, D. D.
Doggett, Theophilus P.
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Emmons, Henry
Everett, O. C.
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Farley, Frederick A.
Field, Joseph
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Flint, James, D. D.
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Frost, Barzillai.
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Gannett, Thomas B.
Gray, Frederick T.
Greenwood, F. W. P.
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Hamilton, Luther
Hedge, F. H.
Hill, Alonzo
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* Dead.

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Lincoln, Calvin
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Livermore, A. A.
*Loring, Bailey
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Williams, J. D. W.
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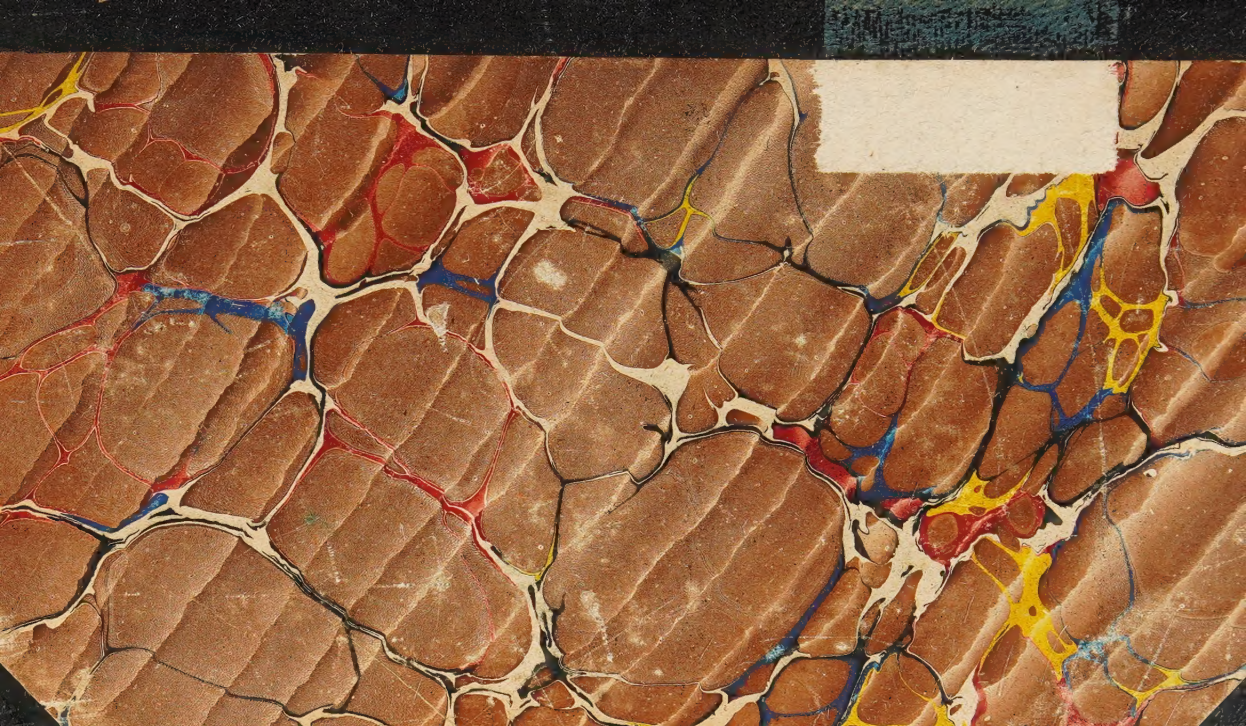
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